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ABSTRACT

Oral folklore and folk drama are emphasized in this report, which focuses on the use of folk media to convey developmental messages through mass media agencies. Discussion covers the relationship between folk and mass media, experiments in India to integrate the two media, problems encountered in the integration process, and folk media's potential as a communication channel. Traditional forms of communication in India are reviewed, particularly folk theater, folksongs, narrative forms, religious discourses, and puppet shows. An examination of the preservation of folk media and the presentation of these forms through mass media agencies centers primarily on radio, television, and film. Projects using folk media to convey developmental messages through both live performance and mass media agencies are described. A discussion of the issues involved in the use of folk forms for developmental purposes and some recommendations for further research conclude this report. A five-page bibliography is provided. Appendices include a brief overview of folk media policies in India, and a list of people interviewed or consulted in India. (LMM)

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TRADITIONAL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION

AND THE MASS MEDIA IN INDIA

BY

Madhu Malik

NOTE

Madhu Malik received her BA and MA degrees in India, and her PhD in the United States, at the University of Virginia ; she is a specialist in folklore, and has participated in a number of conferences on folk media. She worked for several years in broadcasting, as producer and presenter, first on youth programmes and external broadcasts for All India Radio, and later in the USSR.

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INTRODUCTION

In 1972 a series of meetings on the Integretad Use of Folk Media and Mass Media in Family Planning Communication Programmes was organized in London by the International Planned Parenthood Federation and Unesco. These meetings of experts represented the first significant international recognition of the importance of folk media in the communication and development strategies of third world countries. The Experts' Meeting identified folk media, their status, function and advantages, and offered guidelines for the selection and use of folk media as a vehicle for the expression of developmental messages. Special attention was given to the extension of folk media through the mass media, and a model was suggested. Recommendations made at the Experts' Meeting were incorporated into Unesco's family planning communication strategy for the 1970's.

The interest generated by the 1972 meeting and the continuing effort to highlight folk media as a suitable and effective form of message transmission resulted in a number of seminars on related topics all around the world. Among such seminars were the 1973 PPAT Traditional Media Seminar, held in Chiegmai, Thailand, and the Seminar on Traditional Media in Development, held in Jogjakarta, Indonesia, also in 1973. The 1973 Seminar in Jogjakarta was followed by another ; the Seminar on Traditional Media in 1975. 1975 also saw a Comparative Popular Culture Research Seminar on Traditional Media, organized by the East-West Communication Institute in Honolulu, Hawaii. A Seminar on Indigenous Structures, Folk Media and Non-Formal Education for Development was held in West Berlin in November, 1980. Seminars such as these and a steadily growing body of literature on the topic bear witness to a rapidly increasing international awareness of the importance of folk media in communication policies.

India's interest in the potential of folk media as a communication device pre-dates the 1972 Experts' Meeting. The need to use folk media for this purpose was anticipated as far back as India's First Five-Year Plan. The Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Information and Broad-

casting was created in 1954 precisely to meet this need, and the Division has been active in the field ever since. The Indian Institute of Mass Communications has a Department of Traditional Media. The Institute, along with the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's official academy of the performing arts, organized a Seminar on Traditional Media of Communication in 1968. Although folk media have been given importance by India's communicators, and though they have been an integral part of India's Field Publicity Programme for a long time, they have come into a position of greater prominence in recent years. In 1980 alone, three seminars on folk media took place in India : the Seminar on Communication and Traditional Media in New Delhi, organized by the Directorate of Adult Education, the Seminar on Communication and Traditional Media in New Delhi, organized by the Directorate of Adult Education, the Seminar on the Roles of Traditional Performing Arts in Social Awareness and Experimentation in Kathakali, New Delhi, organized by the International Centre of Kathakali, and the Seminar on Communication and the Traditional Media, held in Pune under the auspices of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication and the Film and Television Institute of India. Most of this activity has, however, been centred around the use of folk media as a communications tool rather than the integration of folk and mass media. In this respect, one of the most important events to take place in recent years was a seminar held in New Delhi in 1974. The event, the Inter-Regional Seminar-cum-Workshop on the Integrated Use of Folk Media and Mass Media in Family Planning Communication Programmes, was part of Unesco's drive for the integration and legitimization of folk media in communication. The ten-day Seminar-cum-Workshop was jointly sponsered by Unesco and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, with the Song and Drama Division responsible for local arrangements.

Communication specialists in folk media from twenty countries were invited to New Delhi to participate in the Seminar and to observe the way in which folk media have been utilized for motivational purposes in India. The purpose of the Seminar-cum-Workshop was to discuss the potential of folk media in communication and to focus on the process of realizing this potential. The Seminar thus included the presentation of papers as well as

practical sessions with folk performers. Morning sessions were devoted to papers, including background papers on various folk forms. Every afternoon, one of the eight Indian folk troupes participating in the Seminar demonstrated the basis and specific features of the folk form it represented. This was followed by a discussion between the performers and the delegates on techniques and problems of incorporating family planning messages into an actual performance. The performance, with the family planning message duly incorporated, was shown to the delegates and the general public in the evening. The demonstration and performances took place in a simulated Indian village, specially constructed for the purpose. The Indian Institute of Mass Communication conducted an on-the-spot evaluation, based on inverviews, of the effectiveness of messages conveyed through the evening performances. From all reports, the workshop part of the Seminar proved to be extremely valuable exercise for those who participated in it. However, the workshop concentrated on the potential of folk media in communications rather than on the integration of folk and mass media, which was dealt with more at the level of discussion and in the papers presented during the morning sessions. In addition, participants were shown several programmes prepared for the Indian Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE), programmes based on the utilization of local art forms. Conclusions reached by the delegates on the basis of discussions, the workshop and the SITE programmes echoed the convictions of the 1972 Experts' Meeting. They concluded that folk media are often suitable for carrying modern messages and that they may be adapted for mass media, provided that extreme caution is exercised at four fundamental stages :

1) The identification of flexible elements in folk forms ;
2) the treatment of the family planning message to suit the form used ;
3) the integration of folk media with mass media ; and
4) the presentation of a programme package with adequate pre-testing and appropriate evaluation.

The purpose of the present study is to focus precisely on the relationship between folk and mass media, on actual experiments that have been conducted in India to achieve an integration of the two, on problems that were encountered in the process of integration. Although the study

starts with the assumption that folk media have the potential for use as channels of communication, questions regarding their actual use for this purpose in India will be dealt with, as will the effectiveness of the techniques employed so far. In practical terms, three kinds of activity connected with folk media can be identified in India :

1) The preservation of folk media and the presentation of these forms through mass media agencies ;

2) the use of folk media to convey developmental messages through live performances ;

3) the use of folk media to convey developmental messages through mass media agencies. The first two categories incorporate two each of the three cirteria vital to the present study, but it is only the third which, properly speaking, can form the subject matter of the present study. The first category will be briefly described. However, the second will be discussed in greater detail, since it raises issues germane to the third category.

It must be mentioned at the outset that the present study, conducted with limited funds and within severe time constraints, is far from comprehensive. Although an attempt has been made to ensure that the information provided is as complete as possible, an over-view of all the activity connected with folklore in India was impossible, given the limited resources of the study. This study therefore attempts to focus on representative attempts in the three categories, in the hope that the problems encountered would be typical of the kinds of problems likely to arise under similar conditions. The study is based on interviews and discussions with people involved in communication projects using folk media, and with those responsible for formulating and executing Government policies ; a review of a selected number of programmes, both live and recorded on tape and film, which utilize folk media for developmental purposes ; secondary sources and printed materials. The study consists of the following sections :

(a) A review of traditional forms of communication that exist in India, with an emphasis on those forms which have been or can be utilized effectively for the transmission of messages relevant to social, economic and cultural development.

(b) A selective account and analysis of experience gained in India with regard to the utilization of traditional forms of communication to disseminate information. This section will be sub-divided into three categories, as discussed in the preceding paragraph.

(c) Concluding remarks, suggestions and recommendations.

Before proceeding to the study proper, it may be wise to offer some operational definitions of the key concepts involved. Folklorists have yet to agree on a definitive definition of the term folklore : Funk and Wagnell's Standard Dictionary of Folklore lists twenty one definitions.(1) This study proposes the use of a recent, comprehensive definition offered by Jan H. Brunvand, who describes folklore as "... those materials in culture that circulate traditionally among members of any group in different versions, whether in oral form or by means of customary example, as well as the process of traditional performance and communication".(2) This definition has been adopted because it is wide enough to cover certain folk forms in India where a written text is known to exist, and forms the basis of the folk performance. For instance, several of India's folk theatre forms claim the use of written texts, with assigned authorship and period. Since several definitions of folklore insist on anonymity and oral transmission as absolute imperatives, many of India's folk forms would fall outside the boundaries of folklore proper. Brunvand's definition allows the inclusion of forms that circulate by means other than strictly oral, thus permitting the inclusion in this study of certain theatrical forms which have played a vital rôle in communication, both traditionally and in recent communication strategy.

The materials of folklore, as listed by Brunvand, are :

1) Oral folklore : folk speech (including proverbs and riddles) ; folk rhymes and traditional poetry ; folk narratives ; folksongs and folk ballads and their music.

2) Customary folklore : folk beliefs and superstition ; folk customs and

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(1) Standard Dictionary of Folklore, ed. Maria Leach. New York : Funk Wagnell, 1949, Vol. 1, p. 398-403.

(2) Brunvand, Jan Harold. The Study of American Folklore : An Introduction. 2d ed. New York : W. W. Norton, 1978, p.7

festivals ; folk dances and dramas ; gestures and folk games.

3) Material folklore : folk architecture ; crafts, arts ; costumes, food.

This study will concentrate mostly on the category of oral folklore, with the exception of folk speech, and on folk drama from second category, largely because these are the forms which have been utilized extensively for developmental purposes in India. The determining factor in the choice of genres seems to have been the presence of a strong narrative element, and the study will therefore reflect this bias. However, this should, by no means, be construed as meaning that other folk genres do not perform the function of communication, or that they cannot be used for such a purpose. Folk dances, rituals, symbols , gestures, the use of colour - all of these play an undeniably vital role in communication, but the scope of this study does not permit giving them the attention they richly merit.

The Report on the 1972 Experts' Meeting defines modern mass media as ". . . the channels and institutions which finally broadcast or publish material -- radio, television, film and the print media." (1) This study deals mostly with radio, television and documentary films, once again without denving the enormous role in communication played by feature films and the print media in India. This decision was also largely dictated by the limited nature and scope of the present project.

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(1) Report on Experts' Meeting on the Integrated Use of Folk Media and Mass Media in Family Planning Communication Programmes. London, 1972, p. 3.

CHAPTER I

REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL FORMS OF COMMUNICATION IN INDIA

Folk forms which have traditionally been used in India as a means of disseminating information are diverse in nature and include different combination of drama, dance, song, mime , story-telling and puppetry. This review will list several of the major forms used in this fashion in India, and describe them, not so much for their artistic content but from the point of view of their function or potential as communication channels. The listing is not an exhaustive one, and tends to concentrate on those forms which have actually been extensively used for communicating social message, either spontaneously or in a conscious manner by communicators. This section is restricted to a description of the forms ; an account of their present or past use as a communication device is contained in the following section of study.

Broadly speaking, traditional forms of communication in India can be divided into :

1) Folk theatre
2) Folksongs
3) Predominantly narrative forms, including ballads, folktales and other story-telling forms
4) Religious discourses
5) Puppet shows.

This categorization does not pretend to be a genre classification, and has been devised solely in order to facilitate description of the forms. There is a great deal of overlap between categories. For instance, folksongs are prominent in folk theatre and in puppet shows, Burrakatha of Andhra Pradesh can be, and often is, classified as folk theatre rather than as a ballad form. Questions of genre classification for the Indian forms constitute a fascinating field of study, but they fall beyond the scope of the present study.

FOLK THEATRE[1]

In contrast with the West, Indian theatre did not fragment into opera, ballet and drama proper based on dialogue, but rather remained a composite form containing singing, dancing, verse and prose dialogue. Although the different regional forms of Indian folk theatre stress these elements to varying degrees, they possess several common and unifying features, inherited largely from classical Sanskrit theatre. The Sutradhar (stage manager) and Vidushak (narrator or buffoon) are characters which appear in almost all the regional forms under various names and guises. Other features of folk theatre borrowed from classical theatre include : stage preliminaries, an invocation in the beginning and benediction at the end of the performance ; stylized movements ; masks ; prominent make-up. A half-curtain is frequently used to dramatize the entries and exits of the actors. Indian folk drama is normally performed in the open air, sometimes on a raised podium, but mostly at ground level, resulting in a great deal of intimacy between actors and audience. For its material, Indian folk theatre draws largely upon mythology, legends, romances and a variety of secular themes. There is a great emphasis on singing and dancing ; music is an organic component of the tradition. Prose dialogues are characteristically impromptu, elaborate the content of the songs, and contain a commentary on contemporary social themes. Structure is generally loose and flexible, there is considerable scope for improvisation, elaboration and contraction. Within this basic homogeneity of Indian folk theatre, however, lies a vast diversity.

Jatra

Jatra, though principally the folk theatre form of Bengal, is found also in Orissa and parts of Bihar. It dates back to the 15th century, but became really popular by the 18th. Jatra grew out of the Bhakti movement and to start with portrayed exclusively religious themes. Towards the

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(1) A great deal of the information presented in this portion has been gathered from Balwant Gargi's Folk Theater of India (Seattle, Washington : University of Washington Press, 1966).

19th century, Jatra is usually in song and verse, but prose portions, containing improvised dialogue, are introduced from time to time by the Adhikari (Jatra's equivalent of the Sanskrit Sutradhar). These prose portions are usually interspersed between acts. They are humorous, contain socio-political comments on contemporary themes, often in the form of skits performed by secondary characters. The performers usually sing their own parts. In the second half of the 19th century, the system of the Juri was introduced. The Juri was a team of singers, well-versed in classical music, who would interpret and elaborate on the songs of the main characters. When Jatra performances were cut down in length, the Juri singers came to be increasingly replaced by the Vivek (conscience), a character who gradually took over the Juri's role as Greek chorus. Jatra used to contain fifty to sixty songs and last all night, but the average Jatra performance now lasts about four hours, and contains six to eight songs.

Bhavai

Bhavai, the folk theatre of Gujerat, traces its origins to the 15th century, to the Brahmin Asaita Thakar, whose progeny now forms a caste in itself and continues the tradition of Bhavai, though members of other castes have also taken to it. Asaita, who had been turned out of his caste, expressed a sense of outrage against the caste system and against social injustice through his plays. Bhavai thus began as a form of social protest and retains this character to the present day. Several veshas (playlets) ascribed to Asaita continue eight to ten veshas, loosely held together with songs, dances, and by the Naik (Sutradhar), who provides links between the veshas, comments on them and draws parallel from contemporary life. Bhavai is a deeply secular form, and though it pays the usual obeisance to the gods, and especially Amba Mata, a manifestation of the goddess Durga, its themes draw on the lives of the common people. The village merchant, moneylender, buffoon, braggart and others form the gallery of characters Bhavai most frequently draws on. Ranglo, the clown figure, is a pivotal character in present-day Bhavai. Apart from social satires, which form a major part of the Bhavai repertoire, tales of love (sometimes between Hindus and Muslims),

historical themes and a few mythological tales frequently feature in Bhavai performances. One of the main features of Bhavai is the presence of certain sets of movements, specific gait, gestures and mannerisms, which serve as distinguishing characteristics to define and identify roles.

Bhavai has remained popular in Gujerat since its inception. Its extreme flexibility allowed it contemporaneity in all periods, while still retaining the songs and framework of traditional Bhavai. Asaita's veshas may still be part of a Bhavai troupe's repertoire, but the repertoire remains protean in character. Although perhaps not as popular as Jatra or Tamasha of Maharashtra, Bhavai is becoming increasingly popular in urban areas of Gujerat. There is now also a great deal of interest in Bhavai on the part of playwrights, radio and television producers.

Tamasha

It is not exactly clear at which point in time Tamasha of Maharashtra came to exist in its present form. Tamasha was popular in the 18th century during the rule of the Peshwas, but did not at that time contain the plays or vags that Tamasha now does. The plays seem to be a nineteenth century addition. A full-length contemporary Tamasha typically contains an invocation, or gan ; gowlan, a song on the theme of Krishna and the milkmaid ; lavanis, narrative poetical compositions with a high erotic content ; sawal-jawab or jagra, during which Shiva and Parvati, or some other celestial pair, pose and answer intricate riddle ; the vag, or play ; and the mujra, or homage to saints and gifted writers. Lavanis form the highlight of the performance. Earlier, these were strung together and loosely linked by extempore dialogue from the main characters, including Tamasha's version of the Sutradhar and Vidushak. This extempore dialogue came to be replaced with the vag, which does not allow the same flexibility that the earlier extempore dialogue did. However there is still ample room for improvisation even within the changed format to Tamasha. Themes are sometimes drawn from mythology, but they eventually end up as Tamasha's characteristic blend of satire, farce and ribaldry, as do the secular themes. Lavanis, the heart

of Tamasha performance, are song-and-dance routines, and are now performed by women rather than by young boys. In Jatra, men still specialize in playing female roles, while in Bhavai, women are virtually unknown on the stage. Tamasha has been criticized for its vulgarity and efforts are being made to clean it up, with the institution of a certificate of approval by the Government of Maharashtra.

Nautankee

Nautankee is performed in Hindi-speaking villages all over North India (Utter Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan). Its origins are obscure. There are references to Nautankee in a fifteenth century treatise, but by most accounts it is considerably older. There are five schools of Nautankee, the two major ones being the Kanpur and Hathras schools. The Hathras school emphasizes lyrics and singing , and the Kanpur school dialogue and acting. The Kanpur school tends more to the vulgar and lewd than the Kanpur school does. The traditional invocation is followed by chaubola, a song performed by the Ranga (Sutradhar), and then by the play itself. Nautankee is a secular form and a blend of Hindu and Muslim cultures. Themes are sometime religious, but mostly historical and romantic.

Nautankee is very closely allied to the Bhagat of Agra, the Sang of Haryana, the Khayal of Rajasthan and the Maanch of Madhya Pradesh. Bhagat is distinguished by its intense religious zeal, Khayal by its strong lyrical character and stories of heroism, while Maanch is a trifle more ritualistic than Nautankee.

Ramlila

Ramlila, performed all over North India in both urban and rural areas during the festival of Dushera in October, is a cycle of plays based on the Indian epic Ramayana. The tradition of Ramlila began in the 17th century. It is presented anywhere from fifteen to thirty one evening during the Dushera period. On the last day, huge effigies, usually stuffed with fireworks, of

the chief villains of the Ramayana are set on fire. Ramlila is performed simultaneously in several parts of a city, or even of a large village. Two factors set Ramlila apart from most other folk theatre forms in India. For one, there are no professional troupes or theatrical companies which perform Ramlila. It is strictly a volunteer and amateur production. The same actors may perform a given role year after year, become famous for their portrayals and may even be paid a small sum of money for their trouble, but these are not professional actors and the art is not a hereditary one. The second factor is the attitude of extreme reverence and devotion that infuses both performer and spectator during the performance. The acting is very often of inferior quality, but this in no way diminishes the enthusiasm of the spectators. The Sutradhar appears in the role of Vyas, the Director, who frequently prompts the raw actors in their parts. The plays themselves are sung or chanted, but prose dialogue is not uncommon. A special group of singers, the Ramayanis sing verses from the Ramayana or chant lines from it, often covering deficiencies in the actors. Most Ramlilas also include at least one pageant procession, during with the two main heroes and heroine of the epic, who are usually potrayed by pre-pubescent young boys, are carried through the streets with a great deal of pomp and show. According to Balwant Gargi, "The religious festival of Ramlila is the biggest factor in continuing the dramatic tradition and is more powerful in its sweep than any other folk theater."(1) In spite of its great impact, Ramlila is a form that has not been pressed into service for deliberate communication purposes. Although the Ramlila format may not be as flexible as some of the other forms of folk theatre in India, there is considerable improvisation, and the Vyas also performs the function of commentator-narrator that his counterparts in the other forms do.

Eearlir lilas were not restricted to the story of the Ramayana, and enacted lives of other Hindu heroes and saints, such as King Harishchandra, Dhruv, Pralad and others, but these were usually one-day affairs and are now

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(1) Gargi, p. 113.

almost extinct. Raslila, based on stories about Krishna, is, however, still very vital tradition in the Braj area, southeast of Delhi.

Yakshagana

The folk theatre form of Karnataka in South India, Yakshagana is about three hundred years old. It is extremely heroic in character, with an emphasis on battle scenes and tales of valour. Originally performed in temples courtyards, Yakshagana gradually broadened in scope and style once it moved to the village square. Themes are mostly taken from the two Indian epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, and from old scriptures. The ever-present Sutradhar and Vidushak appear as the Bhagvatha and the Hanumanayaka respectively. The Bhagvatha provides a commentary and links events, in addition to singing for the main characters, who deliver extempore prose dialogue. Both the dialogue and the singing style are highly stylized. Of all the folk theatre forms discussed so far, Yakshagana is probably the closest to being classical. However, the prose improvisation and the flexibility afforded by the presence of the Bhagvatha bring it close to the folk theatre tradition.

Therukoothu

Therukoothu, a folk theatre form of Tamilnadu, has existed for a long time, but has faded in popularity. Though it is essentially operatic, Therukoothu contains a great deal of impromptu dialogue from the actors and from the Kattiakaran (Sutradhar) and Komali (Buffoon). As in Yakshagana, themes are heroic, and are drawn from the epics, scriptures, and sometimes from folk-tales.

These are a few of the major forms of folk theatre which exist in India today and still retain a measure of popularity. There are, of course, numerous others. Bhand Pather, of Kashmir, is a mixture of legend and social satire, with a great deal of improvisation. Kariyala of Himachal Pradesh has an emphasis on dialogue and displays mostly social and economic problems. Veedhi-Natakam of Andhra Pradesh draws on legends, epic tales,

myths, and introduces local problems and events. On the basis of these and the forms discussed in greater detail, it is possible to draw certain generalization regarding the suitability of Indian folk theatre for the communications of social messages. It would seem that the two characters inherited from Sanskrit drama, the Sutradhar and Vidushak, who emerge in almost all the folk theatre forms in one guise or another, are the natural and most obvious candidates to adopt the role of communicators and message-bearers of modern messages. This is the role that they have always performed within the framework of their own traditions, and it would seem only logical to extend their normal functioning to cover the desired messages. The potentially leading role of the Vidushak was commented on by Dr. Suresh Awasthy, a prominent Indian scholar, during a personal conversation, while Shyam Parmar, who used to head the Department of Traditional Media at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, notes that the Vidushak, with his great freedom to improvise and his brand of humour, could be ". . . very useful towards the utilization of folk media."(1) The various manifestations of the Sutradhar could serve a similar purpose since they usually provide the commentary between segments. Of even more importance, however, is the link between segments which the Sutradhar provides, as well the arrangement and order of segments. The order of segments and the link provided between them could prove to be very important as far as the transmission of specific messages is concerned. Working in unison, the Sutradhar and Vidushak (in some forms, the two are actually fused into one character) can, and do, serve an extremely valuable communication purpose.

FOLKSONGS

India has a tremendous variety of folk singing styles ; Shyam Parmar claims that there are over three hundred perceptible folksongs styles in India. Therefore an account of specific and distinguishing features of these styles would prove a futile endeavour as far as this study goes. Parmar divides Indian folksongs into :

1) bhakti songs, devotional songs with strong links to classical music ;

2) ceremonial songs, including seasonal, ritual, work and love songs ; and

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(1) Shyam Parmar, Traditional Folk Media in India. New Delhi : Geka Books, 1975.

3) tribal songs.

Actual folksong styles which have been used in India as a channel of communication include Baul and Bhatiali (Bengal) ; Duha, Ras and Garba (Gujerat) ; Bihu (Assam) ; Mand, Ghumar and Panihari (Rajasthan) ; Rouf and Chakri (Kashmir) ; Sua and Dadaria (Madhya Pradesh) ; Chaiti and Kajari (Uttar Pradesh) ; Kilkali Pattu (Kerala) ; Mado, Dakani and Dhalo (Goa) ; Heer, Jugnu and Giddha (Punjab). All of these styles are capable, with changes in textual content or context, of expressing socially significant messages, and have been harnessed to this effect by Government and private agencies. Folksongs have often been used in India to stir up emotion against the British during the pre-independence period, to foster a sense of national pride and integration, and to enthuse people about various projects. Their use by political parties and Government departments will be discussed in greater detail later in this study.

NARRATIVE FORMS

Poetic forms with a strong narrative element have proved to be particularly effective from the point of view of message communication. The forms discussed below contain a great deal of histrionics and are frequently classified as folk theatre. They were not described under the folk theatre section largely because, in spite of their strong theatrical component, the main emphasis is on the singing of songs, mostly ballads.

Burrakatha

Burrakatha, the ballad-singing style of Andhra Pradesh, dates back to the 15th century, and is held to be an off-shoot of Yakshagana. A Burrakatha troupe generally consists of three persons. The principal performer, the Kathakadu, dances and recites the story, while the others play the drums and provide refrains. The Rajkiya, who normally stands on the right hand side of the Kathakadu, draws analogies between the story and contemporary socio-economic problems, while the drummer on the left side, Hasyam,

provides comic relief. After the Vandana, or dedication, the Kathakadu introduces the story, his style depending on whether the story is of a mythological or social nature. For the latter, dramatic methods are employed to a greater degree. Themes are mythological, historical and socio-political. The flexibility of the Burrakatha format allows it to easily accomodate themes of contemporary relevance, a fact that has been recognized and utilized in the past. Burrakatha is very popular, and more than two hundred professional and semi-professional troupes are now regularly engaged in performances.

Dasakathia

Dasakathia of Orissa is usually performed by a two-person team consisting of a singer (Gayaka) and an accompanist (Palia). The main story is drawn from diverse sources : mythology, love stories, famous battles, folktales. The singing style is highly stylized, but the Gayaka frequently repeats the salient points of the song in prose, dramatizes certain sequences. Humorous interludes, social skits, proverbs and anecdotes are an integral part of the performance. Dasakathia as a form is certainly very suited for the communication of development messages, but it does not seem to have been actively used for this purpose.

Other forms with a strong narrative element are the Alha of Uttar Pradesh, Naqal of Punjab, Villupattu of Tamil Nadu and Powada of Maharashtra. These forms, like Burrakatha, have been used to express contemporary themes such as national unity, patriotism, social reforms and family planning. Among the other singing styles of India, the Baul (Bengal), which traces its origin to somewhere between 700 to 1100 A.D., can be singled out for special mention. The Bauls are known to be expert communicators. They usually perform in two-person groups, male and female. The performance includes singing, dancing and histrionics. There is a strong communication component, concentrated on local social, cultural and economic issues, in the Bauls' performances. At longer sessions, the Bauls engage in Paltapalti, a form of repartee in which contemporary themes are worked in with great facility.

Development officers and political demagogues have attempted to use the Bauls to further individual programmes, but apparently results have been far from satisfactory.(1)

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSES

Religious discourse, or Harikatha, is known by many names in different parts of the country : Katha, Kathapatha, Kirtan, Katha-Kalakshepam, Pravachan and others. The techniques involve a kind of dramatic exposition of stories and songs. They demand from the performer, or Kathakar, a knowledge of the scriptures, musical ability, the qualities of a good actor and story-teller, as well as an intimate knowledge of local customs. A Kathakar stops at various points during the recitation to make points, to draw analogies and offer examples. Stories from the epics and scriptures are the common fund of Kathakars. The Katha technique finds favour in both cities and villages, and has been frequently used for nationalistic and developmental purposes. The improvised portion, or Drashtant, can be very easily utilized to convey the desired message, for these are improvisatory passages and have traditionally performed a communicative function.

PUPPET SHOWS

The art of puppetry in India is an ancient one. References in literary works of the early centuries B.C. indicates that as long as two thousand years ago, puppetry flourished in India as a part of group activity in villages. Puppet troupes usually consist of members of a family, and vary from one-man troupes to seven or eight-member groups. They typically perform at village gatherings, market fairs and school playgrounds. Indian puppeteers have traditionally taken the trouble to learn something about their audience before a performance. They make an effort to acquaient themselves with the customs, taboos and opinions of leaders in the village they

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(1) Deepak Majumdar and Gaston Roberge, "The Bauls : Communicators and Artists", Quarterly Journal, National Centre for the Performing Arts. Vol. VIII, No. 3, September 1979.

are to perform in. This leads their performances relevance and topicality.

Puppets are well-liked and easily accepted all over the country. There are four basic puppet traditions in India :

1) String puppets, or Sutradharika, are popular in Rajasthan, Orissa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh. Manipulating techniques for string puppets are intricate and vary from region to region, as do the size, costumes and shapes of the puppets themselves.

2) Rod puppets, or Putli Nach, are found mostly in West Bengal. The puppets are decorated very much like Jatra players. Manipulation of these heavier and larger puppets is difficult, but their size permits viewing by a larger audience. The Bommlatams of Tamil Nadu combine features of both string and rod puppets.

3) Glove puppets are found in Orissa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu, but are now being increasingly used all over the country. They are the simplest to operate and allow a great deal of flexibility. These features make them particularly suited for use by modern communicators.

4) Shadow puppets, or Chhaya Putli, are popular in four regions, each of which has a distinctive shadow puppet style : Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Orissa. Shadow puppets are two-dimensional and illuminated from behind to cast shadows on a cotton screen. The Andhra and Karnataka puppets cast coloured shadows, while those of Orissa and Kerala project black, silhouette-like shadows.

Puppet performances are usually accompanied by singing. Some forms are almost completely operatic, while others contain stylized prose dialogues interspersed with singing. Themes are varied and cover mythological, historical, social, political and economic ones. Humour is a staple ingredient in several forms of puppet theatre in India. The puppeteer must traditionally be able to sing and play some musical instrument, although in some more highly developed forms, especially in the shadow puppet tradition, there is some degree of specialization, and musical accompanists and singers may form a group distinct from the manipulators.

The potential of the puppet theatre as an effective communications device was recognized relatively early and, of all the Indian folk forms, puppets have probably been used in the most conscious and systematic fashion in developmental programmes. Devi Lal Samar of the Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur, was responsible for some pioneering work in the use of puppets for community development. He also claimed the efficacy of puppets as a form of therapy in treating the mentally disturbed.(1) Shyam Parmar and J.S. Yadhav of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication have done a great deal of research and experimentation in the use of puppets for communication. At an All-India Puppet Festival, organized by the Literacy House of Lucknow in 1970, the pedagogical value of puppets was extensively and prominently discussed.

Specific uses of puppets and of other folk forms by India's communicators will be discussed in the following sections of the study.

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(1) Devi Lal Samar, "Role of Puppets in Mental Therapy", Sangeet Natak, No. 36, April-June, 1975.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESERVATION OF FOLK MEDIA AND THE PRESENTATION OF THESE FORMS THROUGH MASS MEDIA AGENCIES

A great deal of work is being done in India on the authentication, documentation and preservation of folk forms, especially of those which are on the verge of extinction. Special agencies, both official and private, are engaged in this activity, yet there seems to be a general consensus of feeling that these efforts represent the proverbial drop in the ocean, that an enormous amount remains to be done. General complaints concerned the lack of adequate resources to tackle the task of documenting and preserving the huge variety of forms that exists all over India. A lack of coordination between the various government agencies, especially between agencies at the Central and State level, and even between official and private agencies was also frequently cited as a cause for concern.

The chief among the government agencies devoted to the cause of the performing arts is the Sangeet Natak Akademi, established in 1953. The Akademi promotes and subsidizes research, organizes seminars and festivals, recognizes and gives awards to outstanding performers, gives grants for specific productions or publications, and coordinates activities of the State Akademis in the performing arts. Folk and tribal forms of music, dance and drama receive due attention. A special documentation unit exists for surveys and documentation of these forms, and the Akademi has already built up substantial archives. The Akademi identifies much of these forms as are in the greatest need of a revitalization effort and concentrates its resources on these. Choices of forms to be thus singled out are made by appointed committees, and the criteria for selection include aesthetic merit, rarity and the danger of extinction. The forms are documented and recorded on film and videotape, and the Akademi also does all it can to encourage the continuation of the forms. This is done by locating teachers to impart authentic

training, and then setting up training programmes, with stipends offered as an incentive for prospective students.

Of the three units that operate under the Sangeet Natak Akademi, the National School of Drama and the Kathak Kendra in New Delhi, and the Jawaharlal Nehru Manipur Dance Academy in Imphal, at least one, the National School of Drama, has turned to experimentation with folk theatre forms in recent years. Bhavai, the folk theatre form of Gujerat, has been frequently used in the School's repertory productions, as also in student productions. In 1980, third year students of the National School of Drama presented Lomadkhan ka vesh, an adaptation in Bhavai of Volpone, the Fox. The students attended a workshop in Gujerat, saw several Bhavai performances and interacted with bhaviayas, the traditional performers of the form, before presenting the play. Shanta Gandhi's Jasma Odan, produced by the repertory company, also used Bhavai. The National School of Drama's productions using Bhavai and other folk forms have received critical acclaim, and have generated a considerable interest in the forms themselves.

Apart from its activities in the use of folk forms for developmental purposes, the Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting makes a valuable contribution each year through the organization of folk dance festivals during Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi in the month of January. Two of three open-air performances of folk dance festivals from the villages and tribes of India are presented before large audiences. These festivals, as well as others organized by the Sangeet Natak Akademi and the State Akademis, perform several vital functions. They remind the spectators of the rich cultural diversity of India, foster a sense of pride and nationalism, and thereby represent an oblique message-giving situation. In addition, they afford stimulation to spur creative efforts through exposure; for a considerable amount of cross-pollination is possible between performers of different states and styles. Exposure to folk traditions performs an important function for urban audiences. In the words of Kapila Vatsayan, "It has helped to bring before urban Indian audiences the rich multicoloured

fabric of the Indian folk and tribal tradition, which is vigorous, vibrant and continuously assimilating and growing. The government endeavours through the Song and Drama Division and the Sangeet Natak Akademi to permit modern choreographers and students of the Indian dance and music academies to witness these authentic folk dances, so as to give them inspiration and an opportunity to draw upon original and authentic sources.(1)

Several private agencies are also engaged in the effort to foster, preserve and study folk forms. The Darpana Academy of the Performing Arts in Ahmedabad, Gujerat has been active in this respect. According to Kailash Pandiya, an actor and producer at Darpana, a long and sustained effort to persuade traditional bhavaiyas to share their knowledge has had positive results only in the part four to five years. Finally convinced that their new disciples would not pose a threat to their own means of livehood, four bhavaias have consented to start teaching at Darpana. Other institutions engaged in active research and practice of folk forms include Rupayan Sansthan, established in 1960 in Borunda, Jodhpur district, to study the oral traditions of Rajasthan. Komal Kothari, Vijaya Dan Detha and other are very active in the collection and publication of folksongs and tales of Rajasthan. Numerous other agencies have made lasting contributions : Lok Varta Parishad in Tikamgarh, Madhya Pradesh ; the Tribal Research Institute in Chindwara ; the Folk Culture Research Institute in Allahabad ; Kuru Lok Sansthan, Meerut ; Chitrabani of Calcutta, to mention only a few. Several organizations are responsible for the current interest in and widespread use of various puppet forms. Among the most prominent of these are : the Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, founded in Udaipur in 1952 by Devi Lal Samar ; Darpana and Kala Darshan of Ahmedabad ; the Children's Little Theatre and Youth Puppet Theatre of Calcutta ; the Indian Puppet Theatre in Bombay ; Indian Puppeteers of Madras ; and the Bharatiya Natya Sangh and Bharatiya Kala Kendra of Delhi.

Habib Tanvir's troupe of artists, who perform mostly in the Nacha

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(1) Kapila M. Vatsayan, Some Aspects of Cultural Policies in India. Paris : Unesco, 1972, p.51.

tradition of Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, is an example of individual creative activity which, though not engaged in a deliberate attempt to revive folk forms, contributes to the renewal of interest in these forms. Habib Tanvir claims that it is not his intention to give a new lease of life to old traditions. He finds these traditions rich and uses them as a means of creative expression, injecting them with his own artistic perceptions and experience.(1) Jatra of Bengal, Tamasha of Maharashtra and Bhavai of Gujerat have been used in similar fashion by creative personalities seeking avenues of artistic expression best suited to their talents and themes.

Mass media agencies in India have played a significant role in the popularization of folk forms. All India Radio devotes considerable time to the broadcast of folk music and folksongs. Zonal broadcasting centres transmit folksongs meant for rural audience in almost 82 languages. Broadcast of music over All India Radio, or Akashvani, accounts for 43 % of total transmission time, while folk and tribal music accounts for 3 % of total transmission time.(2) In the northeastern part of the country, folk music takes precedence over classical music. Morning chunks of radio programming all over India draw heavily on bhajans, traditional devotional songs. Akashvani's National Programme of Drama, started in 1956, aimed at acquainting people in different parts of the country with the dramatic literature of regional languages and emphasized folk musical plays. Various musical forms are also broadcast on national hook-ups, allowing for considerable inter-regional exchange. Stations in Andhra Pradesh started to broadcast Burrakatha in the 1950's. There is now a regular weekly Burrakatha broadcast, and an

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(1) Habib Tanvir expressed these views during a conversation with the author of the present study. Unless otherwise indicated, all citations and references have been taken from transcripts of a series of interviews conducted in India during the month of January, 1982. A list of persons interviewed can be found in Appendix 2 of this study.

(2) These figures have been taken from Shyam Parmar's Folk Music and Mass Media, New Delhi : Communication Publications, 1977.

extensive list of Burrakatha troupes serves as a panel to be drawn on from time to time. Regional stations have done a lot of recording of folk forms in remoter parts of the country, and this has resulted in large archives of direct field recordings. The importance of these archives to future folklore research in India cannot be overestimated. Akashvani periodically arranges for folk musicians from different areas of the country to perform before invited audiences in New Delhi.

Television (Doordarshan) is a comparatively recent phenomenon in India. The first Doordarshan centre was established in Delhi in 1954, and others followed shortly thereafter in Amritsar, Bombay, Calcutta, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Madras and Srinagar. The various centres of Doordarshan already have a limited amount of broadcast time devoted to folk forms to their credit. Naina Gujri, Jasma Odan and other Bhavai plays have been broadcast over Doordarshan, Ahmedabad. Folk dances, which lend themselves well to the medium of television, are popular with all the television centres. Delhi's Krishi Darshan, a broadcast meant for farmers, frequently broadcasts performances by folk singers. Darpana and the Sarabhai Foundation have recorded some Bhavai veshas, as have the Indian Space Research Organization and Doordarshan, Ahmedabad.

According to Shyam Parmar, radio and television have added new dimensions to folk music, making different styles known outside their language area. The mass media have made people aware of the unexpected wealth of folk and tribal music and exposed musicians to the cultural diversity of India : "Mass media has made them (folk musical styles) live again for millions to be heard and viewed and repeatedly listened to and seen over a vast media network for all time. They have created a new interest in folk music, not only among the musicians and sophisticated audiences, but also among the people themselves.(1) The effect of the renewed interest in folk forms among urban circles, brought about partly by the mass media agencies,

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(1) Parmar, p. 24.

have been commented on by J.C. Mathur : "To radio (and now T.V.) can be attributed much of the recent widespread stimulus to folk music of different regions. A new sense of identity and even pride has come to rural and tribal singers, who are now beginning to refine their modes of presentation."(1)

An interest in a rural art form on the part of urban audiences frequently arouses the interest of the local population in that art form. Jiwan Pani, Assistant Secretary to the Sangeet Natak Akademi, reported the case of Kathi Nandan Das, the sole surviving bearer of Ravan Chhaya, a kind of puppet shadow theatre. In 1972 he was discovered by the Akademi, which proceeded to take photographes and do extensive filming of his work, and then brought him to Delhi for performances, discussions and a cash award. Kathi Nandan Das used to be an insignificant member of his community, but when he returned from Delhi he found his status in the village greatly enhanced. The money helped, but it was the attention from the city folks that proved of lasting importance. Many of the younger boys in the village turned to Kathi Nandan Das for training in his art. This act of spontaneous regeneration was triggered by the Akademi's attention, and resulted in a new lease of life for the decaying form. In spite of this kind of occasional windfall result, the audience for folks forms in India's villages is rapidly shrinking. In the past, entire villages would collect money to invite troupes of folk entertainers to the village, or individuals would invite them to their homes, because of beliefs attached to particular performances, which could avert calamities, ensure good crops, many sons, health, etc. These beliefs are now eroded, and the audience and support system of the performers have consequently been affected. Other factors, such as the influence of India's film industry and a variety of other socio-economic reasons are responsible for the present state of decay of a great many of India's folk forms.

The Films Division of India, which functions under the Ministry

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(1) J.C. Mathur "Encounter of the Performing Arts and Modern Mass Medi", Sangeet Natak, n° 46, October-December, 1977, p. 7.

of Information and Broadcasting and produces newsreels and documentary films, has made several films of different art forms, both classical and folk. Mr. N.S. Thapa, Chief Producer of the Films Division, touched on the problem of finding audiences for India's folk forms. Several films made by the Division on relatively obscure art forms which were fast dying out, resulted in a renewed interest in the form, and this prolonged the existence of the form far beyond what had been predicted. Three films on the Madhubani, Kalighat and Chitrakathi style of painting, and another on Gadua, the making of a certain kind of metal container, are among those that bore this kind of result. However, Arvind Kaul, Director of Industries of the Government of Himachal Pradesh has a somewhat different opinion on revivalism, based on experiences in Himachal Pradesh to resurrect old folk forms. People were selected for training stipends in the Kangra style of painting and the painting of Tibetan tankhas. After completing two to three years of training, the young painters discovered there was no market for new paintings in these two styles, and were obliged to return to their former professions. Arvind Kaul spoke also of one successful attempt in Himachal Pradesh ; at Kinor near Simla, where intricate designs are woven into the traditional dress of the area. The designs are complex and normally take two to three months to complete. Some modifications were introduced, and the designs adapted so that they could be woven into shawls. Kinor shawls now sell very well for about a thousand rupees apiece, since a market for high-priced shawls still exists in India. Perhaps the success of the Kinor shawls as opposed to the failure of the Kangra and tankha schemes has something to do with the fact that an adjustment was made which would ensure continued popularity. Usually, criticism is levelled against the idea of adaptations to contemporary conditions by purists, who take this as vulgarization or corruption of a traditional art form. Experiments in Himachal Pradesh suggest that an art form must either change with the time or die. Even if a traditional form is given a new lease of life, as was the case in instances cited by Mr. Pani and Mr. Thapa, it is more than likely that this renewed vitality and interest was only a temporary phenomenon.

Thus there are conflicting opinions in India on the validity and the success of attempts to preserve old forms that are showing signs of irreparable decay. There is however no disagreement on the need to collect and document these forms before they do die out ; in fact, there is a general feeling that a great deal remains to be done within a very short period of time, and that more resources should be made available for this purpose.

CHAPTER III

THE USE OF FOLK MEDIA TO CONVEY DEVELOPMENTAL MESSAGES THROUGH LIVE PERFORMANCES

FOLK THEATRE

The use of folk media as a means of education, publicity and propaganda is by means a recent phenomenon in India. Ever since the end of the 19th Century, folk media have been exploited as a method of raising the political and social consciousness of the people. Educating an audience while entertaining it is, moreover, a concept that is built into ancient Indian perceptions of the role of art in society. Natyashastra, India's earliest manual of dramaturgy, describes education as one of the prime functions of theatre : "This (natya) teaches duty to those who go against duty, love to those who are eager for its fulfilment, and chastises those who are ill-bred or unruly, promotes self-restraint in those who are disciplined, gives courage to cowards, energy to heroic persons, enlightens men of poor intellect and gives wisdom to the learned. It will (also) give relief to unlucky persons who are afflicted with sorrow and grief or (over) worked, and will be conducive to observance of duty as well to fame, long life, intellect and general good and will educate people. There is no wise maxim, no learning, no art or craft, no device, no action that is not found in the drama."(1)

Indian folk theatre, a composite form containing songs, music, dance, mime and drama, seeks to meet all the intellectual, emotional and aesthetic needs of its spectators. It is more than entertainment, it is a complete emotional experience and creates a state of receptivity in which messages can be most effectively transmitted. This communication theory is

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(1) The Natyashastra Ascribed to Bharata-Muni, trans. by Manmohan Ghosh. Quoted in "The Social Role of Theatre in India" by Farley Richmond, Sangeet Natak, n°25, July-September, 1972, p. 64.

known as rasa Siddhanta, and has been extremely well described by J.C. Mathur : "The essence of the rasa Siddhanta in dramaturgy is to use the 'ladder' of sense-based pleasures, colours, sentiments, thus carrying the spectator to the climax of such sheer enjoyment that he loses his individual entity when in the auditorium. This temporary suspension of individual entity is the moment upon which the playwright as well as the actor seizes in order to induct the message which they seek to communicate. Quite often, therefore, in traditional theatre a sequence of uninhibited eroticism . . . is used as a spring-board for conveying a message which to modern man sounds (like) sheer propaganda on good conduct and morals. To the urban intelligentsia . . . this sounds sometimes very naive and even laughable. But those who have seen traditional performances of (t)his kind in their original environment mingling with the audience whom they seek to reach are often wonderstruck by the effectiveness of the technique."(1)

The communication achieved by Indian folk theatre is aimed at promoting deep-rooted principles related to the religious and ethical life of the people. But folk theatre has functioned also as an instrument of social protest and change. Regional rural drama performers are known to be dependable and persuasive change agents, acting as a bridge between different rural areas, and between rural and urban areas : "It is this group of people who have been responsible for the mobility of ideas, forms and styles between villages and urban centres. They have also been the vehicles of protest, dissent and reform, the carriers of reform-movements and articulators of satire, social comment and thus, the instruments of change."(2)

The secularity of Indian folk theatres owes a great deal to its contemporaneity, which is based not only on the use of dialect and current

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(1) J.C. Mathur, "A Plea for Co-Existence", Round Table on the Contemporary Relevance of Traditional Theatre. Special issue of Sangeet Natak, n°21, July-September, 1971, p. 12.

(2) From a paper by Kapila M. Vatsayan, "The Traditions of the Performing Theatres", presented at the 1974 Unesco Seminar-cum-Workshop. Quoted in H.K. Ranganath, "Not Relics of the Past", Communicator, Vol. XV, n°1, January 1980, p. 24.

idiom, but also on a profound and intimate knowledge of the inner and the everyday life of the communities it serves. In Gujerat, for instance, the traditional bhavaiyas would go from door to door in the village they were to perform in that evening, asking for food and announcing the evening's performance. In the process of doing so, they would pick up information regarding the current problems and preoccupations of that particular village, and this would, of course, be reflected in the evening's performance.

The forms of Indian folk theatre continuously evolve to accomodate change ; it is part of the very nature of any folk form to do so. In Jatra, for example, the Juri was no longer relevant in a changed context, it was replaced by the Vivek, who, in turn, has undergone and is undergoing a series of changes in terms of function and importance within the internal structural dynamics of the form. The chameleon-like nature of folk forms allows them to retain their social contemporaneity and relevance at all times and this largely accounts for the efficacy with which they are able to deliver both traditional and modern messages.

This fact was recognized by leaders of the nationalist movement in India as early as the end of the 19th Century and put to active and conscious use by them. An early example of the use of folk theatre for a specific reason, though not a part of the nationalist cause, was a successful campaign launched by Dipchand, a Swang composer, in 1919. Using a folk drama troupe, Dipchand persuaded several young men of Haryana to join the army during World War I, and was duly rewarded by the British. The nationalist movement felt the need for closer links with the rural areas, and saw in folk music and theatre a manner of conveying ideas and information which was both effective and easy. Folk media grew to rival governement-controlled mass media in political and social campaigns against the British. As political consciousness among the people increase, anti-British sentiments were aired and fanned through the medium of songs and folk theatre. Mythological stories depicting the age-old conflict between good and evil were easily taken as symbolizing the Indian masses and their British oppressors. These plays were, of course, strenuously suppressed by the British.

One of the earliest of such plays was Neel Darpana, a Jatra play, first staged in 1861. It dealt with Bengali indigo cultivators, portraying their social awakening. Other theatrical forms of both North and South India were used to express a sense of social outrage against the acts of the British, to inspire patriotic and nationalist sentiments, to incite revolt, to glorify national and local patriots and heroes. In Tamil Nadu, a hybrid form called the Vilasam and others were used by nationalists to propagate political ideas from 1919 to 1945. Nautankee, Jatra and Tamasha were other theatrical forms to be extensively used during the independence effort. In the 1950's the same media were used to spread the word about independence and its implications.

Political parties of all persuasions employed folk media to popularize their platforms and policies. The most consistent and effective use of folk media for this purpose and to achieve general political and social awareness has come from leftist movements in India. Communist movements all over the world seem to turn, consciously and unconsciously, to folk art and folk forms as a source of inspiration and as a means of propagating their ideals. In the Soviet Union, folklore has been actively and deliberately used for cultural construction and the political education of the masses. As early as 1918, A.V. Lunacharsky, the Commissar of Education, called for and launched a project for propaganda and agitation for socialism by means of art and folklore. Communist China has used traditional forms of communication for a long time. The impact of communist influence on folk forms was felt even in a country like America : individuals and groups who formed a part of the communist-dominated radical milieu of the 1930's and 1940's had a significant impact on the popularization of folksongs in America.(1) In India, a great deal of the early use of folk forms was connected with members of the communist party and with people sympathetic to the cause. The Indian People's Theatre Association, started soon after World War II, exposed corruption,

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(1) Richard A. Reuss, "American Folksongs and Left-Wing Politics", in Folklore, Nationalism and Politics, ed. Felix J. Oinas. Columbus, Ohio : Slavica, 1978, p. 10-11.

social abuse, religious bigotry, political and economic oppression, initially through the medium of Jatra. Utpal Dutt's People's Little Theatre in Calcutta, has been producing Jatra-like plays since 1947. Plays such as Lenin, Jallianwala Bagh, The Fall of Berlin, Vietnam, Mao-Tse-Tung, Ho-Chi Minh by their very titles betray the political persuasions of their creators. Later chapters of the Indian People's Theatre Association in other parts of the country used the prevalent forms of those areas. In Maharashtra, Anna Bhau Sathe wrote political satires using Tamasha. Special vags such as Aklechi Goshte (1944) were written specifically to spread communism. In Andhra Pradesh the Indian People's Theatre Association used Burrakatha and tried to revive the techniques of an old form Veethinatakam. Although the communists were most active in using folk theatre with political motivations, they were not the only ones. Other parties, including the Congress party, have been known to put Tamasha, Jatra and Nautankee to similar use.

Several forms of folk theatre have been used to satirize contemporary life. Dina Pathak used elements of Bhavai in Lok Bhavai, a satire on Bombay life, and in Ho Holika. P.L. Deshpande satirized post-independence socio-political situations in Maharashtra through the medium of Tamasha in plays such as Sarvodaya. Tamasha was also used by playwrights such as Amar Sheik and Bhawankar.

Government agencies have frequently resorted to folk media as a means of popularizing and spreading the word about official projects and five-year plans. In Tamil Nadu, the State Government has attempted to use Yakshagana for family planning projects. The Song and Drama Division has used Bhavai to propagate family planning themes in plays such as Aram Rajya, produced in collaboration with Darpana. Tamasha has been used by the Song and Drama Division for the last twenty years to disseminate five-year plan messages and others. Ek Tamasha Achha Sa, written in Hindi but based on Tamasha, was produced in Delhi and proved to be extremely popular.

FOLKSONGS AND NARRATIVE FORMS

Folksongs and sung narrative forms have traditionally functioned

as an expression of the aspiration of the people. In times of war and political unrest, folk styles evolve messages to boost morale and to inspire patriotic feelings. Historical narratives in the form of ballads stir up loyalty towards popular leaders, present and past, and instill admiration for their deeds. Therefore, the use of folksongs and ballads for identical purposes since the turn of the century is really no more than a continuation of their age-old and time-honoured function. A great deal of what has been said of folk theatre is equally true of folksongs ; in fact, the songs were often composed for some theatrical production and later took on a life of their own. Folksongs have been used, specifically and effectively, by the nationalist and communist movements, by political parties, especially during election campaigns, and by governement and private agencies to promote pet causes. During the wars between India and China and India and Pakistan, folksongs were used by official and volunteer organizations to stress the unity and solidarity of the people, to boost the morale of soldiers, to mobilize the support of workers and farmers. The emphasis in most of these songs was on communication and simplicity, rather than literary merit or musical complexity. During the struggle against the British, folksongs were used even to convey information such as times of venues of picketing, marches and satyagrahs, and to keep the people informed about developments in other parts of the country, pacts, agreements, victories, acts of villainy.

The use of popular songs as a medium for political messages began in Bengal during the Swadeshi movement. In his famous Swadeshi Samaj Speech of July, 1904, Rabindranath Tagore spoke of the need to reach the neglected rural masses and advocated the use of festivals, Jatra and song. A great number of nationalist songs based on folk music were written in Bengal during that period. In Madras, Subramanya Bharathi started to use folk music to stir up patriotic feeling in 1905. The forms used by him included Chindhu, a kind of quick-step song used by pilgrims, and Kummi, sung during family ceremonies. Oradi Muthoveerappa Pillai used the Oradi, or single-lined stanza songs, through which he commented extempore on political events. Songs on political personalities, on the glories of the spinning-wheel, on temperance, the need to boycott British goods and other diverse themes were set to well-known

folk tunes. Some even found their way into print. Cheap booklets such as Punjab Padukolai Chindhu : Songs about the Massacre in Punjab (the Jallianwala Bagh incident) helped spread and popularize the songs. Other composers and singers who used folk forms in the South include Madurakavi Baskara Das, Bhumi Balagadas, T.S. Viswanatha Das. Alha of Uttar Pradesh, Lavani of Maharashtra, Gee-Gee of Karnataka, Villupaattu of Tamil Nadu, Kabigan of Bengal, Burrakatha of Andhra Pradesh were among the forms which roused the nation against the British. The potential of Burrakatha was realized in the early forties by sympathizers of the communist cause, who are actually partly responsible for reviving the form. The Andhra Pradesh branch of the Indian People's Theatre Association, Praja Natak Mandali wove criticism of corruption into historical Burrakatha tales in order to educate and organize the people against an unjust system. Other parties were quick to follow suit. This type of activity still continues. Mr. N.N. Pillai, who used to head the Department of Traditional Media at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication spoke of some recent plays produced by pro-Naxalite students of Osmania University in the Burrakatha style. The plays were about the oppression of tenants by landlords and apparently had a great impact in the rural areas where they were performed.

Alha, Burrakatha, Villupaattu, Puran Bhagat (Punjab), Pandwani (Madhya Pradesh) and Powada (Maharashtra) have been widely used by the central and state governments during five-year plan periods to establish rapport with the people. Contemporary themes such as national unity, the need for various social reforms, family planning, rural cooperatives, matters of hygiene and nutrition have been translated into the local idiom, using forms that the people could easily relate to. Folksongs and narrative forms were and are commonly used during election campaigns by almost all of India's political parties. The Fertiliser Corporation of India and various banks have used forms like Burrakatha to promote their schemes. Burrakatha and Alha have been used even to advertise individual products.

Among the folk forms of India, folksongs and ballads have probably been used to convey developmental and socially relevant messages most frequently

and most effectively. In the words of H.K. Ranganath, "They have successfully played decisive roles in attuning the rural mind to the importance of a social or political theme like national unity, social welfare and even family planning. They have thus become the most persuasive communicators on any given theme. In the effort of making them lovable communicators, the original content is squeezed out and a new message is integrated to suit the needs of times and place. This process has given them a sense of contemporaneity and functional relevance."(1)

RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

The use of Harikatha as an instrument of social and moral changes is not new or unfamiliar in the Indian context. Saint-poets like Kabir and Tukaram have used Katha to preach doctrines that were radical in their times. Like the other folk forms of India, Harikatha shifts and moulds itself to changing social situations, with traditional themes being continuously transformed to suit contemporary needs. During the partition of the country, Kirtan was used as a political instrument in Maharashtra. Harikatha has been employed by the Andhra Pradesh branch of the India People's Theatre Association, Bhajan parties have been used during elections, Government agencies have secularized the form to some extent, incorporating many democratic values.

Harikatha does not seem to have been used either in the past or the present quite as extensively as folk theatre, folksongs or puppets, in spite of its great potential as an agent of change. John Gumperz, who conducted a study in and around Khalapur, a village about 80 miles north of Delhi, made the following pertinent observation regarding the role of sanyasis, swamis, gurus, kathakars and other types of religious communicators : "In assuming their religious role they are freed from many restrictions of caste systems, they interact freely with many individuals with whom they

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(1) H.K. Ranganath, "Not Relics of the Past", p. 24.

otherwise would not come into contact, and their message is assured a more sympathetic hearing than that of ordinary strangers."[1] Just as folk actors, playing the part of some historical or mythological personage, are able to invest their messages with a credibility that they might otherwise lack, interpreters and performers of religious texts are able to speak from a position of authority that far exceeds any that a social or development worker would enjoy. Sushila Mehta, a social education worker, relates an incident in Pochanpur, a village in the Najafgarh block, not far from Delhi.[2] Ms. Mehta was able to achieve a desired goal by assuming the role of village kathakar. The village was torn between two rival factions : the Panchayat (village council) and a group led by a rich and powerful farmer who sowed sedition among the villagers and sabotaged Panchayat projects such as the digging of a well. Ms. Mehta hit upon the idea of using Katha to demonstrate to the villagers the true motives of the farmer's group and to win them over to the side of progress. She started very gradually, with stories of Prithviraj Chauhan and Jaichand Rathore. Over a period of time she described the evils of internal strife and the resultant suffering of the people, leading up very gradually to modern feuds and how they could bring about the ruin of the entire community, without ever resorting to direct exhortations or advice. The katha sessions were popular, and finally led to an open discussion and informal arguments between the people following one evening's entertainment. Seeing that the mood of the villagers had changed, the rich farmer capitulated, and, desirous of maintaining his credibility in the eyes of the villagers and his status as leader, announced a substantial monetary contribution toward the digging of the well. This incident represents an example of insightful and appropriate use of a folk medium to achieve a certain end by creating a general mood and stimulating objective thought among the target audience.

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(1) John J. Gumperz, "Religion and Social Communication in Village, North India", in Language in Social Groups. Stanford, California : Stanford University Press, 1971, p. 202.

(2) Sushila Mehta, "The Katha Technique", in Working with Village People : A Collection of Case Studies. New Delhi : National Council of Education, Research and Training, 1965.

PUPPETS

According to Meher Contractor, "Puppets have a subtle impact on simple audiences which no human actor can achieve."(1) Meher Contractor has used puppets for over fifteen years to teach children physiology, hygiene, civics, history, geography and poetry, claiming that the subjects are conveyed to the children more vividly and are remembered more easily through the use of puppets than through conventional means. Development workers have found that what is true of the child is equally true of the villager, and puppets, especially glove puppets, have come to be increasingly used in the field of communication and development in recent years. Puppets are being used in physiotherapy, psychotherapy, to educate children, to encourage scientific methods of farming, to promote the use of fertilizers, and to deal with a host of social problems from dowry to child delinquency. The Song and Drama Division makes wide use of puppets in its campaigns to promote various government projects. Several other organizations, government, semi-government and private, have also used puppets in support of individual schemes.

In 1971, the Union Bank of India employed puppet troupes to tour selected areas of Uttar Pradesh, with a play designed to educate people about the value of small savings and the concept of interest-earning. The play, which was written by Mr. N.N. Pillai, using puppets prepared by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, centred around two families, one of which had a savings account at the local bank, while the other had hidden their savings in a flower pot. After testing in and around Delhi and in Uttar Pradesh, the play was performed in a cluster of one hundred villages in Uttar Pradesh. The Bank reported an increase in rural deposits in the areas where the play was shown. The experiment was repeated, once again with the help of another puppet play dealing with the concept of small loans and other facilities offered by the bank. The Small Savings Directorate has also since used puppets to promote their activities and has been as satisfied with the

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(1) Meher K. Contractor, "The Role of Puppetry in Contemporary Education", Sangeet Natak, n°15, January-March, 1970, p. 40.

results as the Union Bank of India was. Another play, written by Mr. N.N. Pillai and produced by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, used rod puppets to explain India's role in the Bangla Desh war. This play was shown in and around Delhi just before the war and told the story of two brothers. The elder brother systematically oppresses the younger, who finally begins to assert himself with the help of a friendly neighbour.

In 1965 the Life Insurance Corporation of India used puppets to educate rural masses about life insurance, enlisting the help of the Literacy House in Lucknow. These plays were shown to a combined audience of 250,000 in villages of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. The number of inquiries at local life Insurance companies following the performances was compared with normal frequency, and was found to be considerably higher. The field staff of the Corporation also reported a definite impact on their business.

Indian Explosives Limited used puppets to encourage the use of their fertilizers, as did several other fertilizer and chemical companies. The Literacy House of Lucknow trains flying squads of puppeteers to go to remote villages with specific messages. Darpana of Ahmedabad has used puppets to promote family planning. The Xavier Institute of Communication in Bombay has launched a project using puppets for adult education.

The examples given above should serve to demonstrate the wide use of puppets in development projects in India. In most cases, feedback was given importance, and the impact was easily discernible in the form of tangible results. Of the folk forms used in India, the use of puppets has therefore been the most systematic. This may have something to do with the early involvement of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication in such projects. However, other organizations have also devoted considerable time and research to problems connected with the use of puppets. Devi Lal Samar's Bharatiya Lok Kala Mandal, for instance, has done meticulous and systematic work in selecting ways of inserting messages into a puppet play without damaging its artistic integrity.

Folk media have thus played a historical role in inspiring support for the independence movement. They have been, and continue to be used in the political activities of various parties. The role of folk media in publicizing social projects such as family planning, five-year plans, national integration, modern methods of agriculture, matters of hygiene, nutrition and defence policy, has come into the forefront since independence. Private agencies like Darpana have produced several plays on social themes either with or without official backing and support. A play called Leela, produced by Darpana, used Bhavai. It was intended for urban audiences and contained a message relevant to them : it is not particularly easy to get easy money. The government-sponsored play Aram Rajya, which also used Bhavai, related to family planning, health and nutrition. Aram Rajya proved to be very popular and ran to 250 shows between 1965 and 1966, with five to ten thousand attending each showing. Jaroka, sponsored by the Cooperative Sangh of Gujerat, promoted the cooperative society movement. Chini Jadugar na Vesh was performed during the war with China. Amma, one of Darpana's earlier productions, served the cause of national integration. Individuals who have used folk forms as an expression of their own creative impulses, have been able to embody their social concerns in forms which communicate effectively. People like Habib Tanvir, Shanta Gandhi, Dina Pathak, Shiela Bhatia and scores of others, though not directly associated with official agencies, have done a great deal through individual efforts.

However, the great bulk of work done in the direction of active use of folk media in terms of sheer quantity has been carried out by agencies of the Governement of India, the chief among them being the Song and Drama Division of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

The Division was formed in 1954 under the Directorate General of All India Radio with the intention of using folk media to convey developmental messages in the same manner that the Communist Party of India and other political parties were. It was to function as a publicizing unit for government projects, to entertain troops in border areas and to organize folk dance festivals during Republic Day celebrations. In 1960 the Division was separated

from the All India Radio and became an independent media unit of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. According to the latest count, the Song and Drama Division now employs 237 staff members and 745 staff artists (performers, producers, composers, musicians, etc.). It has its headquarters in Delhi and eight regional centres, each with its own Deputy Director, at Bhopal, Chandigarh, Delhi, Calcutta, Gauhati, Lucknow, Madras and Pune, and nine sub-centres located in Simla, Darbhanga, Patna, Nainital, Bhubaneshwar, Imphal, Hyderabad, Srinagar and Jodhpur. The Division has its own Departmental Troupes and a Sound and Light Unit. The Departmental Troupes consists of six Drama Troupes, nine Armed Forces Entertainment Troupes and twenty eight Border Publicity Troupes. In addition to the Departmental Troupes, from time to time the Division engages the services of four hundred private troupes, registered under the categories of drama, dance-drama, composite programmes, folk and mythological epics, folk recitals, puppets, ballads and religious discourses. The registered parties are contracted to perform a requisite number of programmes in a given area within a specified time-frame, and are paid by the performance. In rural areas, the venues of performances by both the registered parties and the Departmental Troupes are decided by the Directorate of Field Publicity, another wing of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Directorate of Field Publicity also makes arrangements for a stage, microphones and lights, announces the performance in surrounding villages. Registered parties are, however, expected to make their own travel arrangements. Statistics of performances given by the Song and Drama Division during the last three years are given in the table below.(1)

Category of troupes	1978-79	1979-80	1980-81
Armed Forces Entertainment Wing	428	369	439
Border Publicity Troupes	1,360	805	1,614
Departmental Drama Troupes	467	430	449
Sound and Light Unit	84	101	136
Private Registered Parties	17,251	15,534	15,298

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(1) This chart and other statistics regarding the Song and Drama Division have been taken from a 1982 brief prepared by the Division.

As can be seen from this table, the majority of programmes focussed on rural areas is carried out with the help of the private registered parties. These parties are generally screened by a committee consisting of the Station Director of the local Akashvani station, an official of the Directorate of Field Publicity, a representative of the Song and Drama Division and an outside expert. The selection of groups is continuous, and these screenings usually take place about twice a year in the various regional centres and sub-centres. The Song and Drama Division selects, trains and rehearses the troupes, often with the help of producers and composers sent out from Delhi, approves the finished programme and hands the troupe over to the Directorate of Field Publicity for deployment. Apart from making the actual arrangements for the performances themselves, a representative of the Directorate of Field Publicity, usually a Field Publicity Officer, is present at each performance. He supervises the performance and sends a report back to the Song and Drama Division on the quality of the performance, its reception and on the troupe itself ; its discipline, punctuality and related matters. Registered parties are sometimes de-registered on the basis of consistent bad reports from Field Publicity Officers. On occasion, the Field Publicity Officers will obtain feedback in the form of select opinions from the audience, but there is no systematic attempt to perform this service.

According to Farley Richmond, the Song and Drama Division discovered, soon after its inception, that the folk performers it was recruiting were largely illiterate and incapable of writing or even preparing scripts into which developmental messages would be interwoven.(1) This resulted in the centralized script approach, where song lyrics for, say, a patriotic song, would be written and approved by the headquarters in Delhi, and then sent to all the regional centres for inclusion in the programmes of the registered parties. The parties would set the song to local folk tunes, very often with

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(1) Farley Richmond, "The Social Role of Theatre in India", Sangeet Natak, n°25, July-September, 1972.

the help of someone from the regional centre or even from Delhi. Ever so often, a registered party will find or commission a song, which will then be performed exclusively by it, provided that the song and its message meet the approval of the screening committee.

During the month of January, 1982, the Song and Drama Division launched, in cooperation with the Government of Punjab, an intensive national integration campaign in Punjab, in response to a general state of unrest in that area. The author of the present study visited the Regional Centre of the Division at Chandigarh in order to witness a performance typical of those designed to reach rural areas. According to information given by Mr. N.M. Desai, Deputy Director in charge of the Chandigarh centre, 180 performances were to take place in Punjab as part of the special national integration campaign : 20 performances each by four registered parties ; 20 performances by three Simla Troupes (Departmental Troupes) ; 20 performances each of two plays to be put on by the Central Drama Troupe of Delhi. The registered parties were to penetrate remote villages, the Simla Troupes were to cover towns, the Drama Troupe, cities. The reasons given for assignments were connected with the need for a proper stage, curtains and lights for the more elaborate shows, slated for cities and towns.

The performance witnessed in connection with the present study took place on the 16ht of January, 1982 in a village called Landran, district Roper, about 40 miles away from Chandigarh. The population of Landran is 15 thousand, it has electricity, a high school, a hospital with 25 beds and an MBBS doctor in attendance, a veterinary hospital, a bank and a post office. The performance that evening was attended by a local dignitary, a Member of the Legislative Assembly ; village dignitaries, including the Sarpanch (village headman) and an ex-Sarpanch ; a District Publicity Organizer from the Directorate of Field Publicity, all of whom gave little speeches at the end of the evening's entertainment.

The registered party which performed that evening was the Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendra, based in Jullunder and led by Pran Nath Premi. The group,

which consists of seven members, has been registered with the Song and Drama Division since 1967, and does an average of 125-150 performances for the Division very year. It is, of course, free to perform elsewhere, as are all the registered parties, when not under a specific contract with the Song and Drama Division. The Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendra specializes in what the Division calls "composite" programmes ; a mixture of folk dance and songs.

The performance took place on a raised stage in the main village square, before an estimated audience of about three thousand, and lasted approximately two and a half hours, including the speeches at the end and an unexpected power failure, which the villagers patiently squatted through. Although a few of the items performed contained dance movements, the emphasis was very clearly on song. Of these, at least half had pureley entertainment value, while the others were songs based on Delhi scripts, designed to discourage divisive feeling and to present the picture of a strong and unified India. The leader of the troupe, Pran Nath Premi, did not sing or dance himself. He played the harmonium for all the numbers and acted as an emcee, weaving messages of national integration into the banter he presented between items. A few messages concerning family planning were also thrown in for good measure ; these were handled with humour and greater assurance than the ones concerning national integration.

There was little in the programme which could be called genuinely folk. To be sure, there were songs sung in folk styles such as Bhangra and Gidha, but these came across only as pale imitations. There is only one perform performer in Premi's group who has been trained in the folk tradition - an older artist called Milkhi Ram. Milkhi Ram's rendering of a folk epic was the only item presented that evening that could be held to belong to the folk traditions of the Punjab. The remaining, younger members of the group have all learned their art from Premi himself, who himself is not part of any particular folk tradition. The lack of true folk numbers in the show did not, however, detract from the audience's obvious enjoyment of it. The children were a little restless, but, on the whole, it was clear that the performance

was an event in the life of the village and that the villagers enjoyed the attention being focussed on them.

Although the activities of the Song and Drama Division provided an ideal opportunity for research into the efficacy of using folk media for developmental purposes, very little has actually been done in this direction. In 1964 a Study Team on Five Year Plan Publicity made an assessment of the Division's work ; this was the time when the Division was actively engaged in the registration of new parties and in approving programming for them and for two Departmental Troupes that had just been set up. The Study Team concluded that the performances had a definite impact and suggested better scripts and more qualified technical field personnel. The Indian Institute of Mass Communication also did a study on the Song and Drama Division, but this one did not look very closely at the quality or nature of the programmes themselves. On the other hand, a great deal of criticism has been levelled against the Song and Drama Division by India's communicators. The Departmental Troupes of the Division seem to have made a more favourable impression than performances by the registered parties. However, productions by the Departmental Troupes are costly and generally less mobile than the registered parties, who are supposed to penetrate the more remote villages. The registered parties, on whom the burden of communication for those geographical areas that need it most must rest, are the ones criticized more often and loudly, along with certain general aspects of the Division's policies.

Most of this criticism centres around an element of crudity perceived in the efforts of the Song and Drama Division to use folk media for the transmission of specific messages. The general feeling was that the sensivity to the medium and the subtlety which are essential if the messages are to be effectively rendered, are missing in the performances of the Song and Drama Division, and especially in those of the registered parties. Mr. N.N. Pillai held that the Division's efforts are blatant and propagandist and defeat their own purpose. Mr. N.C. Jain labelled the attempts amateurish and counter-productive. Mr. Keshav Kothari, head of the Kathak Kendra, said that the

Division's performances are crudely written and shabbily produced, with little genuine worth, either artistic or communicative. Mr. Jiwan Pani of the Sangeet Natak Academi claimed that the Division's programmes are uninteresting and the messages too obvious to be effective. Views such as these were frequently aired by the people interviewed for the present project, and are just as frequently encountered in various printed sources. It is felt that although there is a fair amount of utilization of folk media in India by the Song and Drama Division and other agencies, there is very little proper and appropriate utilization. The reasons offered for this are varied :

1) There is no systematic, methodical, research-based approach to the utilization of folk media, and no mechanism for collecting feedback and appropriate modification of programme.

2) Agencies such as the Song and Drama Division have used their methods without change for over 25 years, without taking into consideration factors such as changes in the nature of the messages, audience structure and perceptions.

3) There is a lack of coordination between agencies at the central and state levels, or between different agencies at the central level.

4) Experts sent from the Centre to help prepare and rehearse Departmental Troupes and registered parties are more often than not unfamiliar with local traditions and uneducated as to the communicative potential of folk media.

5) The coverage of Indian villages is not as extensive as might be desired. Depressed localities of urban centres where migrant workers from rural areas live are largely ignored.

6) The performers in both registered parties and Departmental Troupes are frequently urban-bred artists with little true knowledge of the folk forms they seek to exploit.

7) The registered parties ar underpaid.

8) Not enough of an effort is made to locate and register groups consisting of true folk performers.

Birendra Narain, Director of the Song and Drama Division, showed an awareness of these and related problems during an interview conducted in New Delhi. He indicated that the Division does the best it can within its limited resources with regard to the number of shows, coverage of villages, payment to the registered parties and the employment of qualified personnel. He recongized the need for a technical field network to take over some of the function now performed by the Directorate of Field Publicity with regard to accurate feedback on the quality and feedback of performances. The Division is now beginning to decentralize to a greater degree and to coordinate its activities. The use of registered parties will have to continue, but it is hoped that proximity to the new technical field network will provide for better qualify. Departmental Troupes are now concentrated in the north, but the Division hopes to eventually have at least one in each state.

Critics of the Song and Drama Division have pointed out major and valid draw-backs in its functioning. However, it must be remembered that a great deal of what is now taken for granted in the field of folk media and communication was largely unknown at the time of the Division's inception. It is now possible to point out with hindsight how things should have been organized, but trial and error on the part of the Division has been partly responsible for the present enhanced knowledge of how folk media can be best utilized for the purpose of communication. If the Song and Drama Division is viewed as a pilot project for evolving norms for the utilization of folk media, it can be held to have taught India's communicators some very valuable lessons. Past experience should also have taught the Song and Drama Division some lessons. One of these, the need for competent and trained field staff to report on the reception of performances and provide a basis for improving them, seems to have been internalized by the Division. It is to be hoped that the Division will exercise greater care in the recruitment of all its employees.

Better scripts from the centre will not result in improved communication. It is the point of transition from script to folk form that is crucial. This transition is difficult enough to achieve even in the most ideal of circumstances, but if both the Division officials and the performers themselves have only a superficial knowledge of the folk form they are dealing with, the difficulties are compounded and the task complicated to the point to becoming impossible.

The Song and Drama Division has performed a tremendous service by keeping the effort to use folk media alive and by providing a source of income, however meagre, to countless entertainers. But perhaps it is time now to concentrate on fewer troupes, fewer registered parties and fewer shows a year, instead of stretching available sources thinner and thinner in the cause of extended coverage. The number of performances and the number of villages covered is important, but the quality of these performances must be given precedence. There is a performance at the village of Landran approximately once every three months. The frequency of programmes there could surely be sacrificed to quality.

Quality here must be defined from the point of view of the power of these programmes to communicate their messages. It is easy to be harsh about the programmes, which may appear much cruder to the urban eye than they do to the rural audience they are intended for. It must also be remembered that the criterion to be used for judging any such programmes is not so much their aesthetic merits as their ability to communicate effectively. It is true that the artistic integrity of a folk form must be maintained in order for it to communicate, but artistic considerations must in this case be considered secondary to its efficacy as a communicative device. An effective feedback system would help establish both the communicative value of individual performances and what the target audience finds aesthetically pleasing, and these would have to be used as criteria for judging the quality of the performances rather than the opinions of experts and purists.

The weakest link in the Division's efforts are the registered parties.

The Division has in the past sought to compensate for this weakness by setting up departmental troupes, capable of performing the function that the registered parties could not, but these troupes have become top-heavy enough to cut off access to the deep villages where they are needed most. Instead of turning to departmental troupes to cover deficiencies found in the registered parties, perhaps a more determined and systematic search should have been launched for folk artists who were capable of performing the required function. It is difficult to believe, especially in the face of the experiences of people like Habib Tanvir and others, that there are or were no folk performers who could convy the required messages in ways peculiar to their traditions. It is likely that this is precisely where the problem lay : the Division personnel, untrained as they were in the art of communication and that particular folk form, may have been unable to recognize the value of understated, more subtle messages. Not knowing the medium, they could very well have overlooked where and how the message was being conveyed. Mr. Jiwan Pani related an incident concerning a Jatra party in Nagaspur which was asked by a Directorate of Family Planning to conceive a Jatra play on family planning. The leader of the troupe presented the Mahabharata in the style usual to Jatra, and only added some extra dialogue between Pandu and his wife Kunti. Pandu asks Kunti why she has stopped at three children and why she has instructed his second wife Madri to have only two, especially since Gandhari, the mother of Kauravas, has just given birth to a hundred sons. Kunti talks about the kind of upbringing the Kauravas are going to have and predicts what kind of people they will turn out to be. She claims to desire something better for her sons, the Pandavas. After this dialogue, the play proceeded as usual. The family planning officer rejected the play on the grounds that it was not about family planning at all. He apparently expected the entire play to somehow hinge on the subject. It is likely, therefore, that some of the folk troupes that were turned down by the Division were turned down by people who could not relate to their style and manner of message-giving. As Mr. Pani pointed out, folk forms in India are often highly stylized and carry their messages in stylized, oblique fashion. In the case of the Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendra, Milkhi Ram, who could have provided the show

with the true folk flavour it lacked, and have introduced messages into his traditional repertoire as and when he considered appropriate, was not the person in charge of the group's programming. It was Premi who had the skill needed to deal with the Song and Drama Division, the ability to "understand" what was required of them, to make the transition to composing and choreographing on the basis of neutral written scripts. It seems, therefore, that the Division should take pains to investigate and acknowledge message-giving forms that are different from the ones they have been used to. It may find a far greater fund of folk performers who are capable of furthering the Division's ends if a certain flexibility as to what constitutes effective communication is introduced. In all fairness to the Song and Drama Division and its present director, it must be mentioned that signs of this increased flexibility do exist. There is an awareness among at least the higher officials of the Division that a comment here or an aside there can be just as effective as an entire play or song devoted to some developmental theme.

CHAPTER IV

THE USE OF FOLK MEDIA TO CONVEY DEVELOPMENTAL MESSAGES THROUGH MASS MEDIA AGENCIES

In spite of all the recent talk concerning the use of folk media in mass media formats for purposes of developmental communication, their use through the government-controlled mass media agencies, radio, television and documentary films, is actually not as extensive as through live performances. There is no organization to compare with the Song and Drama Division, whose prime purpose it is to coordinate or encourage such activity. Although there are isolated instances of specific programmes that use folk media for the transmission of socially relevant messages, such attempts are sporadic and more a matter of the imagination and initiative of individual stations and producers than one of clear-cut and centralized policy. What follows is a discussion of some of these isolated attempts. A more detailed survey would doubtless reveal a far greater number of programmes like those mentioned, especially from the regional radio and television stations. However, the sampling presented below should suffice to pinpoint some of the problems inherent in the process of media transfer and raise some issue relevant to the integration of folk and mass media.

Along with broadcasting folk music in its original form, Akashvani has in the past done some work in the use of folksongs to convey social messages. There used to be a radio programme called "Songs of the Nation Builders" in which folk singers were invited to present songs in their traditional folk styles depicting the progress made in the respective regions. Bhajans with nationalist themes are frequently used in Akashvani's broadcasts for industrial workers and rural audiences. Kailash Pandiya of Darpana in Ahmedabad once did a radio play serial using the Bhavai format designed for mill workers. He created a character called Vallabhai who moved around the mill area meeting various families, discussing their problems and offering advice. Among radio programmes using folk forms to convey specific messages

brought to the attention of the author of the present study the most interesting were :

1) Madurakshanalu, a radio programme utilizing Burrakatha to convey information on paddy cultivation. This programme, produced by Y. Hanumantha Rao, Farm Radio Officer, Akashvani, Vijayawada and written by P. Satyanarayana Reddi, Village Development Officer, Vijayawada, won the National Akashvani Annual Drama Award in 1974. The programme is about a young man, recently married, who has just returned from a prolonged stay in the city. It centres around his attempts to get rid of his father-in-law, who is anxious to find out what the young man has learnt in the city about paddy cultivation, the use of fertilizers and other related matters. According to N.N. Pillai, who was on the Awards Committee for that year, none of the Committee members knew Telegu well, but were nevertheless fascinated by the programme. The messages were repeated often to ensure retention without belabouring the issue, since the programme was able to deflect surface attention to the humour of the situation, with the young man, anxious to be alone with his wife after his protracted absence, expressing his impatience and irritation with his father-in-law in a series of asides. Mr. Pillai felt that this programme achieved its objective admirably without being didactic or obvious in its attempt to instruct farmers on the correct techniques of paddy cultivation. The use of Burrakatha, its stock characters and devices, enhanced the humour and irony of the programme. It served as an attention-getter and, by doing so, rendered the programme's communicative quality more effective than if straight drama had been used.

2) Nai Naveli Nautankee. This is a series of programmes written in Hindi and produced by Urmil Kumar Thapalial of Akashvani, Lucknow. These programmes, done in the Nautankee style, have been broadcast over Akashvani, Lucknow and also presented live in Delhi on several occasions. The programmes include witty repartee and some flirting between groups of men and women. They deal with a variety of subjects such as black money, adulterated food, the dowry system, and problems concerning the changing status of women both in and outside the home. Once again, the true messages are inobstrusive and masked by humour.

3) Swatantra Kumar Ojha, Producer with Akashvani, Indore, has produced

several programmes utilizing folk forms. Bhukhand Tap Raha Hai, broadcast in August 1981, was a 45-minute radio play, an adaptation of a long poem of the same title by Chandra Kant Deotale. It conveyed the message that man is responsible for his own fate through the use of Malwa-Nimad folksongs. Other programmes produced by S.K. Ojha include Suddiyan Shesh Rahin (1978), a programme based on the folk hero Raja Bhoj ; Kali Mati ki Gandh (1980), which uses the Maach tradition of Ujjain; folk songs such as Nai Bhor ujla Rup and Dhanya Bharat Hai. All these features and songs focus on social evils or highlight the socio-economic development and progress of the country, using the Malwa-Nimad tradition, which includes several distinct styles of folk singing.

These are only a few of the efforts to use folk media for the transmission of developmental messages at these and other radio stations. A great deal of work is reportedly being done with Bhavai in Ahmedabad and Baroda. Akashvani, Pune has done a whole series using Tamasha. Orissa does a lot of folk stories in the traditional style, so, apparently, does Hyderabad. A more detailed survey would no doubt uncover a great many more specific instances of creative people at various radio stations opting from time to time to use folk media to achieve developmental ends or as a form of artistic expression.

Doordarshan (television) has done its own share of such programmes. Suresh Awasthy mentioned puppets as a medium particularly suited to television, and, sure enough, most of the developmental-oriented programmes on television which use folk media utilize puppets. The Puppets, a Calcutta group run by Raghunath Goswami, has produced several programmes for Doordarshan, Calcutta.

Basanter Tika Nin (1977) uses the glove puppets typical of Bengal and Orissa to allay the fears of children regarding smallpox vaccinations. The programme was designed mainly for rural children within the reach of the Calcutta television centre. Amradweeper Katha (1977) used the flat figure technique to tell a story written in folktale style. The story promoted exchange as a means of enjoying resources from other regions. Gowami also

produced in 1979 a video recording for the National Institute of Design in Ahmedabad. This recording used silhouette or shadow puppets similar to Ravana Chaya, the leather shadow puppets of Orissa, and was devoted to the theme of family planning. This film was produced during a workshop and was later shown in different parts of the country.

Perhaps the most significant contribution as far as the use of folk media to convey developmental messages over mass media is concerned comes from the various experiments conducted during the Satellite Instruction Television Experiment (SITE), conducted in India between August 1975 and July 1976. An ATS-6 satellite loaned by NASA enable the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Doordarshan to directly beam programmes to 2,330 villages for about three hours a day. The villages formed six clusters spanning seven states, and four languages : Oriya (Orissa), Hindi (Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh), Telegu (Andhra Pradesh) and Kannada (Karnataka). Television sets were set up in villages inacessible to Doordarshan broadcasts. Morning transmissions of SITE were meant for school children and included science education, biographies of great Indians, health education, current affairs and entertainment. Evening transmissions contained news, entertainment programmes, many of which served to underline the unity underlying India's cultural diversity, instructional programmes on agricultural improvement, animal husbandry, health, hygiene, nutrition and family planning. Half-hour national segments in Hindi were broadcast for all six clusters and included a news bulletin. In addition to the six clusters served via satellite, a low-power terrestrial television transmitter set up in Pij in Gujerat broadcast a one-hour transmission to the Kheda district every evening. This transmitter continued to function after SITE was over, as did five other centres, all using low-power terrestrial transmitters.

SITE was held to be successful in terms of the hardware and technical operation. The entire experiment was extremely well documented. In one research study, undertaken by ISRO, anthropologists lived for a year and a half in selected villages in the six clusters and Kheda. They collected

data and made observations before, during and after SITE in six experimental and six control villages. In all 6,500 respondants were used in this study. The Planning Commission of India conducted a similar study using a smaller sample : 1,600 respondants from five experimental and six control villages. The general findings of the surveys were :

1) Gains were noted in health and nutrition, especially among females.
2) There was no significant gain in family planning.
3) People with little or no prior media exposure gained most in awareness.
4) Views of male respondants showed a gain in national integration.
5) Modernity increased in both attitudinal and behavioural information. Female viewers gained more than male viewers.

Although SITE was well documented with regard to hardware and the impact of first exposure to television, no significant surveys were made of softward. The surveys were done more for the total viewing environment than actual programming. Three base productions centres were set up to make the bulk of programmes for SITE, although the areas it served has varied agro-economic and cultural backgrounds. As a result of this, area-specific programming turned out to be minimal. No system was set up by which original material, produced on the basis of research done in the regions they were to cover, would be shown and then evaluated. In actual fact, 40 to 50 % of television time was taken by old documentary films of the Films Division. There was, however, some innovative programming involving the use of folk media, especially, but not exclusively, from ISRO in Ahmedabad, using the Kheda rural transmitter.

The Kheda transmitter was not really part of the original SITE plan. The people at ISRO built it for purposes of testing hardware and software, and the Kheda Communication Project was the ultimate result of this experimentation. 500 television sets were installed in 355 villages of the Kheda district. The one-hour daily transmission consisted of the half-hour national segment and half an hour of original programming using Gujerati and the Charantari dialect prevalent in the Kheda district. Kheda turned into a laboratory situation, with scientists, engineers, managers,

writers, journalists, social researchers, artists, and programme producers involved in an intensive effort to find better ways of utilizing television. A great deal of their experimentation revolved around the use of folk media, mostly Bhavai and folksongs, to communicate specific messages. It is, of course, this aspect of the experimentation at Kheda which is of particular interest to the present study.

The social messages chosen for transmission were based on careful research to establish in which areas social or material changes were needed. The results of this research were then conveyed to the Kheda producers. Issues dealt with in Kheda programmes included widow remarriage, child marriage, dowry, untouchability, drinking, gambling, the ill-treatment of women. Relevant messages in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, health and family planning were also included. Only those issues which were felt to be relevant in the context of the Kheda villages were touched upon. The approach was therefore localized and area-specific. Different programmes were designed to reach different target audiences, based on age, sex and even caste.

Programming at Kheda includes serial and single-slot programming. However, most of the experimentation takes place in those programmes which use the series mode of production. Some of the series produced at the Kheda project which use folk formats are :

1) Jaroko : a series in 300 parts. Ranglo and Rangli, stock characters of Bhavai, complete with their characteristic movements, songs and musical instruments, appear in the beginning of the programme and introduce the subject. The presentation of the story proper is followed by another episode involving Ranglo and Rangli.

2) Rangleela : produced in 25 parts, also used the Bhavai format, Ranglo and Rangli and one other stock character, who would introduce the story, appear as characters in the story proper and then return as themselves to discuss the story and the issues it raised. This series was done with a great deal of humour and was designed to help the villages identify their

own problems.

3) Hun Ani Han : which ran about 40 parts, used puppets. The format was similar to Jaroko and Rangleela, only in this case the story was presented through puppets and the role of Ranglo and Rangli was played by two characters, one of whom was a live performer and the other a puppet donkey.

4) Narayan Narayan : in 50 parts, used the old theatre or Desi Natak style of Gujerat. This programme was a post-SITE one.

Other programmes produced at Kheda included Khaiye Piye Saja Raihe, a serious on health which used puppets ; Nandu-Indu, a fantasy with a genie and two children as the main characters ; and a series loosely based on the Panchatantra, some of the programmes using puppets and the Panchatantra's story-within-a-story technique.

One of the most revolutionary Kheda programmes in terms of the utilization of folk media formats was Dhanji Makanji Malji, produced by Hasmukh L. Baradi. This series, which was originally intended to consist of 20 parts, eventually ran 50. It did not use a folk format in the conventional sense, but instead was based on what its producer called folk elements and media habits of the community. The media habits of the target audience were established through research ; for instance, the research team noted the existence of Kathakars, who sat in the village square and narrated stories. Issues such as the time these stories were told, what kind of stories were told during different seasons, festivals, and the style of story telling were studied and then incorporated into the format and filming of the programme. The existence of characters that recurred in the Kathakars' stories was noted, and the series introduced several characters which appeared over and over again. The chief character, Chatur Mota, was not a figure from the Kathakars' actual repertoire, but a creation of the producer, along lines suggested by the Kathakars'stories. Chatur Mota was a contemporary character, and one which the villagers could easily identify with. He was established as a familiar

face after about five programmes and the series went on to become enormously popular. At the end of the original 20 parts, Chatur Mota was sent away on a pilgrimage, but public opinion was strong enough to force the producers to bring Chatur Mota back from his pilgrimage and continue the series. Chatur Mota had become a real person to the viewers to such an extent that there were speculations and heated arguments as to where he had gone on his pilgrimage, based on the period of his absence.

Mr. Baradi feels very strongly that mass media cannot borrow directly from folk media, no matter how skillfully this is done. For him, mass media is another form of expression and must evolve its own formats. The new formats can and should be based on elements taken from the old forms in order to remain reassuring and familiar and to serve their purpose of both entertainment and communication. He spoke at great length about the use of folk media for developmental purposes and stated that this is essentially a futile exercise. Using forms like Jatra, Tamasha, Bhavai Yakshagana and others to relay modern messages betrays, in his opinion, a lack of proper understanding of how these forms function. They evolve in response to specific needs, as an expression of society at a certain time in a certain place. The true folk performers are mobile and receptive to their times, and maintain the relevance of their forms through a process of continuous change and adaptation. For instance, when bhaviyas came to a village for a performance, they would take pains to discover as much as they could about the village and the villagers. Adavo, the merchant, is a Bhavai character that goes back 400 years, and has its own specific steps and songs. But in that evening's performance, Adavo would be both the ageless Adavo and the merchant (bania) of that village. The village bania and the people he interacts with would be present both on the stage and in the audience. This kind of immediacy is lost if the form is transferred to the screen, or even on a stage, which involves the loss of ground-level contact. Mr. Baradi points out that one cannot expect a programme using a folk form to communicate when it is not really using the folk form. Introducing a few characters from some folk form is not enough. The result may be popular and entertaining, but it will not communicate in the way that the folk medium does in its natural setting.

Mr. Shyam Benegal expressed essentially the same view when he said that folk media are participatory, non-alienated forms, and that presenting them in a format that is spectator-oriented is to create a division that is unnatural to the form. If an alienated form is to be presented, then one may as well present something that is totally alien rather than a pale imitation or even a parody of the real thing. According to Mr. Baradi, if success is defined as achieving the kind of understanding which leads to tangible results, these programmes cannot be held to be successful, no matter how popular they may be. The villages may watch the shows and even enjoy them, but they will not have less children because of them. In Chatur Mota Mr. Baradi claims to have created a character that modern people could identify with and that could potentially have more of an influence on their decision-making than some character lifted from folklore. Even though Chatur Mota is not a stock folk character, he is based on several similar ones and combines his contemporaneity with an ageless quality in much the same way that the Adavo and other Bhavai characters do . If Bhavai were to be used for modern messages in the true meaning of the word, new characters would have to be created, each with its own distinctive and distinguishing steps and songs, following the patterns laid down in the creation of traditional Bhavai characters. This would call for rare talent and a very intimate knowledge of the form. Transferring such a character to television or radio would involve a further step, where the limitations and advantages of the new medium would have to be given due consideration.

One other issue of general interest which rose out of the experimentation at Kheda was connected with audience participation. V.N. Raina, Producer with the project reports of a series of programmes produced by him which went beyond stimulating thought among the villagers about their own problems.(1) A programme called Vat Tamari recorded people's views on problems such as transport, drinking water, schools, then recorded answers from the concerned authorities are broadcast both versions. This format apparently

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(1) V.N. Raina, "Strategy for Change: The Kheda Television Experiment", Vidura, vol. 15, n°4, August, 1978.

worked very well as long as the leaders and richer members of the village community were being interviewed, but when the microphone and camera turned to the Harijans (untouchables) and the poor, response to the programme dropped, both among the affluent and the poorer sections. A sense of unease and distrust crept in. Disturbed at the apathy among the oppressed classes and their unwillingness to do anything to alter the statu quo, Raina and his crew went a step further, and, along with creating an awareness of problems, began to provide follow-up services in a series called Mari Mehnat Mari Kamai. For instance , if home industries like producing incense, candles, soap or basketswear suggested as a means of secondary income, demonstrations on television would be backed up with training facilities. They even went so far as to persuade the Bank of Baroda to offer financial assistance to these ventures and to arrange marketing outlets of the finished goods. In spite of these efforts, the response from the villagers was far from satisfactory. On the basis of his experiences, Mr. Raina concludes that "The two possible reasons why we have failed to shake the oppressed adequately can be that we are either expecting too much from the medium or that out approach is not the most suitable. Besides, T.V. alone cannot do much unless there is a clear-cut follow up action plan.(1) The need for follow-up action concurrent with a media campaign is, of course, indisputable. The frustration experienced by Mr. Raina has been given some perspective by Mr. Ross Kidd : "The key constraint to progressive social change is not lack of skills and information about farming, nutrition, family planning, health, etc. It is structural inequity : inequity of wealth, of government services, of educational and employment opportunities, of wages, of power, and of basic human rights. This inequity undermines the capacity and confidence of the poor to control their lives, it conditions them to accomodate themselves to the norms of the dominant groups rather than to struggle against them".(2) On the basis of experiences in Africa, Mr. Kidd reached the conclusion that putting accross development information, no matter how effectively it is done, can achieve social change

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(1) Raina, p. 218.

(2) Ross Kidd, "Folk Theater : One-Way or Two-Way Communication ?", Development Communication Report, n°28, October, 1979, p.5.

only if there is a deliberate and visible committment on the part of those who propagate the message. The present study must stop short of a general discussion of the validity of a developmental effort, and concentrate only on that aspect of the process which deals with getting the message accross effectively, while at the same time admitting the need for both commitment and follow-up action. Mr. Raina offered two reasons for continued apathy even when follow-up action was provided : expecting too much of the medium and draw-backs in the approach being used. His second reason, the question of appropriate approach is more germane to the issue, and will be addressed in the next section of this study. His approach left little to be desired as far as two-way communication is concerned. His own programmes, as well as experiments conducted in Botswana and Kenya and isolated incidents in India such as the Katha incident involving Sushila Mehta, suggest that two-way participatory communication is the best of all possible approaches. In spite of Mr. Raina's pessimism, his system has proved to be extremely promising. It was precisely the participatory nature of a lot of the Kheda programmes which evoked the largest number of compliments from people in the field such as hyam Benegal and Gopal Dhutia of UNICEF. The Kheda Communications Project has thus shown that :

(a) communication must be two-sided to be truly effective ; and

(b) the mass media must evolve their own formats, their versions of "folk" media, based on the older forms, a process which requires substantial adaptation and research.

Programmes based on folk media were also designed for other SITE centres. One of the most significant of these was a set of about 20 film modules contributed by UNICEF and broadcast in the Chattisgarh cluster of SITE villages in Madhya Pradesh. These modules range in length from one to fifteen minutes, and were designed so that they could be put together in different combinations. This was an experimental idea in the Indian context, and the possibility of building a series of module banks at major television centres was a major consideration. The modules were aimed at aiding the non-formal education of children between six and ten years of age. Each module had

a specific learning objective : symbolic representation (matching, recognition, labelling) ; cognitive organization (perceptual discrimination, orientation, visual discrimination, part and whole relationships, subjective and objective discrimination) ; relationship concepts (quantitative, positions and distance) ; classification and reasoning. The language used was the local dialect, a variation of Hindi. The scripts, songs and music was of Chattisgarh folk origin. Some modules used animation (puppets, cut-outs, actual objects), others live performers, and some a combination of the two. The performers were part of the Chattisgarh Nacha tradition, and the forms used included nursery rhymes, puppets, proverbs, folktales, animal stories, riddles and songs. Most of these were from the Chattisgarh area, though a few originated in Rajasthan and in other parts of the country. They were all, however, of folk origin.

The team that produced the modules consisted of Shyam Benegal, film maker ; Durga Bhagwat, social anthropologist ; Shama Zaidi, film script writer ; Habib Tanvir, an expert on the Nacha tradition ; and a cameraman. In March of 1974, a research unit made a one-week survey-cum-research trip to Chattisgarh and collected data : a profile of shcool-going children, enrollment figures, educational facilities, family patterns and folk traditions. During stage two, the modules were conceptualized on the basis on the information gathered by the research unit and 36 scripts were written. Stage three involved the actual shooting of the modules. In September of 1974, Habib Tanvir assembled 35 Nacha groups from all over Chattisgarh, and the process of rehearing and shooting began. Stage three was completed in only ten days.

The creation of these modules was an idea that came originally from Shyam Benegal. Chattisgarh was chosen by him bacause he could understand the local dialect and because of Habib Tanvir's outstanding work in the Nacha tradition. Mr. Benegal reports that the team went into the field and the Nacha workshop in September with a set of scripts and preconceived notion about the modules. They found, however, that the Chattisgarh folk tradition was rich in the learning concepts they were aiming to project, and so a decision was

made to ignore the scripts and to concentrate on presenting what the tradition already possessed. According to Mr. Benegal this wealth of learning in the Chattisgarh folk tradition came as a major revelation to members of the team. The only problem was that the meaning and learning messages in the folklore tradition had been lost somewhere along the way as a result of repetition, habit, familiarity. For instance, a work song chanted by women while transplanting rice was found to contain very precise instructions on how and when to transplant, but the song was being sung automatically, with no attention being paid to the words. The module team saw as its task picking up items that suited their learning objective, presenting them in a novel manner, and putting meaning back into the cliches through surprise and novelty. This the team was able to accomplish with the help of the techniques of their medium, film. One of the major findings of the SITE module experience was therefore that there is no need for contrived scripts, that indigenous versions of the material needed can be discovered, and that all that is needed is to make people once again aware of the meaning of these indigenous versions. The messages can be infused with new vitality and freshness using various techniques available to the new medium. Mr. Benegal expressed the opinion that a tremendous learning process is built into oral traditions, and that ways and means can be found to tap into this source of learning. In order to survive, people in the villages must learn to recognize signs of the seasons, understand the workings of nature and the fabric of social relationships. This may not be formal education, but it is learning nevertheless. The modules were designed for the non-formal education of children, and the team found enough material connected with non-formal learning in the Chattisgarh tradition to dispense with their prepared scripts altogether. It is likely that someone looking for family planning messages or messages concerning nutrition would also find material appropriate to their purpose.

Among the songs discovered by the module team were several that dealt with the seasons, social relationships, and even a kind of rudimentary science training. One such song describes the phenomenon of rain in highly poetic terms : a lake falls in love with the sky, and burning with desire,

evaporates and becomes a cloud, rushing towards a union with her beloved. Finding a nothingness instead of the sky, the disconsolate cloud begins to weep and returns to the earth in the form of rain. (Varsha, 4 minutes, folksong and cut-out animation). Creation myths were used in the modules to teach parts of the body (Mankhe ki Kahani, 7 minutes, folksong), and parts of the head (Dabra, 2 minutes, riddle). The importance of cooperation and friendship was projected through the use of the story of the leaf and the clod of earth, who became friends. When the wind blew, the clod of earth would sit on the leaf to prevent it from being blown away, and when it rained, the leaf would cover the clod to prevent it from melting away (Patta aur Dhela, 4 minutes, folk song and animation). Modules such as Kanjoos Bania (12 minutes, folksong) warned against the dangers of avariciousness. The seasons were covered in Bara Masa, a nine-minute cut-out animation module describing the twelve months of the year through agricultural activity and festivals which occur in each month with the help of a folksong. The seven days of the week were described in Saat Din (3 minutes), which used a folktale combined with photo animation.

Mr. Benegal reported that the folk performers experienced no particular problems in the transition from live performance to film, and this was confirmed by Habib Tanvir and Gopal Dhutia of UNICEF. The Chattisgarh performers were quick to grasp what was required of them and were in no way intimidated by the camera. The modules were shot on location, using actual streets and huts. The camera followed the performers, and modules were performed and taken by the camera wholly. Slight adjustments had to be made, especially with regard to the time factor, since the Chattisgarh actors were used to a more flexible time format, but this presented no major problem. The module team had a clear idea of the requirements of the new medium and the performers were totally at ease in theirs. They were thus able to anticipate and smooth out any problems which might otherwise have arisen. Shayam Benegal went on to shoot a full-length feature film Charandas Chor, using the same performers.

One development that Mr. Benegal felt was of great importance was an

instance of what he termed media transfer effect. Apparently during drought periods in the Chattisgarh area the only thing that continues to grow is a species of wild lentils. The lentils are eaten by both animals and humans in lean periods, even though they contain a toxic substance which can lead to an incurable disease, unless the lentils are subjected to a certain process of cleaning and detoxication. At the time of shooting Chattisgarh had been through three years of drought and conditions were near starvation. The module team and the Nacha groups assembled for the workshop conceived and shot a short humorous piece using animation, mime and dance, designed to teach the people how to treat the lentils before eating them. This module was picked up by about ten of the Nacha groups, and though it took three months to get the film processed and edited, and it wasn't shown in the area till much later, these Nacha groups were performing the item two days after the shooting in villages as much as 25 miles away. On the basis of this incident, Mr. Benegal concluded that live performances are actually likely to reach a larger number of people more quickly and at less cost, that mass media. Mass media have their own place, however, and their own function, for they are vital in reviving the original meaning of words now taken for granted, a process to which Mr. Benegal gave a great deal of importance.

The Films Division of India, which functions under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has also done a fair amount of experimentation with folk media in the creation of documentary films with specific messages. The Films Division, established in 1948, produces an average of about 90 documentaries and 60 newsreel editions a year, and these are screened in 6,500 odd cinema houses all over the country. The documentary films and newsreels are also supplied to mobile units of the Directorate of Field Publicity for screening in rural areas. It is estimated that about 30 to 40 million see the documentaries and newsreels every week. The use of folk media in the work of the Films Division is sporadic and seems to be more a matter of personal choice on the part of individual producers rather than one of policy. Since the films are made for all-India distribution, there is no evidence of an area-specific approach. Mr. N.S. Thapa, Chief Producer of the Films

Division did, however, indicate that more concerted and localized attempts would be launched in the near future.

The folk media predominantly used in the films viewed for this study were Jatra, Tamasha and puppets.[1] Several others used folksongs, with a background music to provide the main narration. Bichar (1977) uses Jatra to promote the cause of family planning. Asla Dadla Nako Ga Bai (1978), made with the help of a Song and Drama Division Tamasha troupe, also promotes family planning. This film has both the Tamasha players and an "audience" on the screen and includes repartee between the audience and actors. A pregnant woman and the audience join in making fun of the woman's husband, who insists on more children. In Sasural ki Sair (1974) which uses puppets, a new bride is given instructions by her mother-in-law on how to restrict the size of her family. Ek Thi Lachhi (1974) was made with the collaboration of the Puppet Unit of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, tells the poignant story of a young girl, her trials and tribulations and her early death during childbirth. A story from the Panchatantra serves as the basis of The Ungrateful Man (1978), while folksongs are used in films such as The Mist is Clearing (1981), which deals with adult education, especially of women, and Pyar ki Jeet Hui (1971), which intertwines love legends of the Punjab such as Sohni-Mahiwal, Heer-Ranjha and others into a modern love story, involving a rich girl and a poor boy, who finally opens a garage with the help of a loan from the Life Insurance Corporation of India and is then able to ask for her hand in marriage.

Akal ki Bakal (1980), which uses string puppets, was based on the true story of a labourer who spent part of his month's salary on a drinking bout and fed the rest to a donkey, mistaking it for a beautiful woman. O.P. Sharma, Producer with the Films Division, made a few comments on problems he encountered while filming this documentary on the evils of drinking. The

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(1) Appendix II contains a complete list of films viewed for the present study.

puppeteer he chose to help him with the film was one among several recommended by the Song and Drama Division. The puppeteer was able to effectively incorporate into the design and manufacture of the puppets used in the film the suggestions made to him regarding the appearance, costumes and size of the puppets, but experienced difficulties in meeting specific requests regarding manipulation and operation. For instance, he was unable to provide lip synchronization, which, though perhaps not so important for live performances, was crucial for the many close-ups of the film. He was also unable to maintain complete control over the smaller movements of the puppets, with the result that the puppets were not in focus all the time. Other problems arose during close-ups, such as the visibility of the strings. A compromise was finally made, and the puppets were held and manipulated by hand for the close-ups, while strings were used for the longer shots. Mr. Sharma felt that the puppeteer was competent, but untrained in specific aspects such as lip and eye synchronization, which were essential while making the transition to film. Shyam Parmar also notes in his book Traditional Folk Media that puppetry does not transfer very well into the medium of film.(1) These statements may be true of string puppets, but glove puppets have been known to transfer exceedingly well to film and television, not only in India but also in other parts of the world. Unlike the UNICEF module team, Mr. Sharma did experience some difficulty in medium transfer, both with the medium itself and with the performer. Simpler puppet sequences, such as those of Ek Thi Lachhi are easier to transpose to film. Akal ki Bakal, however, demanded much more of the puppet medium because it was relying for a good part of its effect on film techniques such as close-ups, dissolve sequences of the donkey-puppet and the dancing girl-puppet, out-of-focus shots to duplicate the drunken stupor of the labourer. In spite of the initial difficulties, Mr. Sharma was able to compromise and adapt and produce a film which was more than just a simple shooting of a puppet show, but rather a unique blend which truly utilized the folk and the mass medium. His experience, and that of the UNICEF module team, indicate that the transfer to a new medium, though difficult, is not impossible, given

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(1) Shyam Parmar, Traditional Folk Media, New Delhi, Geka Books, 1975.

patience, imagination, sensitivity and knowledge of the media involved.

Mr. Sharma described a different set of problems in dealing with folk performers during the shooting of Pyar ki Jeet Hui. The film used some folk performers from the Punjab, who sang and performed some dance sequences. The song they "sang" was actually recorded by one of the playback singers of Bombay's film industry. Mr. Sharma felt that the folk performers' singing style was too loud and coarse and simply not good enough. Their old, stylized way of singing also lacked the crispness needed to deliver the song in the required limited period of time. The song was eventually sung in the folk style by a performer more used to the medium of film. Ironically, part of Mr. Sharma's problem withe the folk singers was that their tunes were either heavily stylized or laced with tunes from the Indian films. It eventually took a film playback singer and composer to come up with a tune and a song which was more acceptably "folk" than those of the original folk performers.

Mr. O. P. Sharma has drawn on the Mahabharata for several of his films. In much the same way that Shyam Benegal found the Chattisgarh folk tradition rich enough to contain the messages he wished to convey, Mr. Sharma looks to the Mahabharata, where he finds episodes and stories which suit his purpose perfectly. In Sandesh (1967) he used thumb prints in the Mughal miniature style to animate a story from the Mahabharata with the help of a background narrative song. The message was food conservation and episode he found was one in which Krishna visits the five Pandavas, then living in a hut in the forest. There is no food in the house, but Draupadi, the Pandava's wife finds one last grain of wheat which she shame-facedly serves to the royal guest. Krishna eats the last grain with a great deal of relish and pronounces himself well satisfied. In Asha ki Kiran (1972) Mr. Sharma chose the story of Eklavya and Dronacharya to show how physical handicaps can be overcome with persistance and to demonstrate that Eklavya, a simple Bhil boy, was equal to

the warrior Arjuna in skill with the bow and arrow.(1)

The Films Division plans a new cartoon series using folktales which will be known as The Wisdom of Mauji Ram, with a new film in the series being released every two and a half months. This series promises to have a great deal in common with Mr. Baradi's Chatur Mota series at Kheda, especially since Mauji Ram, the chief character is to represent India's farmers. Mr. N.S. Thapa indicated that future projects of the Films Division would make a more extensive use of folk media and would be produced in local dialects.

On the whole, opinions in India on the wisdom of using mass media to broadcast folk media imbued with social messages were found to be mixed. A few felt that folk media and mass media cannot be integrated, but most held that an integration was possible, given due care, sensitivity and knowledge of both the folk medium and the mass medium. However, everyone, including those who have used folk media in mass media formats, felt that the attempts made so far have been sporadic, unsystematic and poorly documented. A need was expressed for far more research and experimentation before any real conclusions could be reached on the validity of the attempt.

The chief problems that were encountered during the transfer of folk media to mass media were held to be surmountable, and ways can be found of compensate for most deficiencies.

1) Time frame limitation - This was specifically mentioned by all the people consulted for this study who have done any work with folk performers on film or radio. Folk performances are invariably too long for the mass

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(1) Dronacharia, the guru of the five Pandavas, was so impressed with the skill in archery of Eklavya, a bhil boy, that he feared for the reputation of his star pupil Arjuna as supreme archer. Eklavya claimed Dronacharya as his guru, for he had made an effigy of the famed guru and practised before it. When he learnt about this, Dronacharya asked Eklavya for his thum as gurudakshina (offering to the guru) and Eklavya complied. However, Eklavya learnt to shoot a bow and arrow just as effectively by using his big toe instead of his thumb.

media and must either be abridged, edited, or shown in segments. The performers have difficulty watching a clock while they perform. However, time limitations now apply not only to mass media formats but even to live performances. Mr. Jiwan Pani pointed out that people do not gather in the same way or for the same periods of time any more as they once used to, even in the villages. Rituals and ceremonies connected with marriages used to take months in the past, but have now been shortened to a few days. It used to be that people from surrounding villages would walk long distances through forests to see a performance, and would not be able to return home till the following morning. All-night performances were the logical answer in that particular context. However, circumstances are changing rapidly, and so must the folk forms if they are to survive. Thus the problem of time limitation in one that confronts folk media in general and not just folk media making the transition to mass media.

2) Absence of live audience - The give and take between performers and spectators is lost in mass media formats. Folk media are actually meant to be participated in and not watched. Removing the audience robs the folk medium of one of its most vital dimensions. Chimanlal Nayak, a well-known bhavaiya, makes a point of studying his audience very carefully before and during a performance. He claimed that he is able to distinguish between moods, not only of the audience in general but even of groups within sections of it, and to tailor his performance accordingly. Chimanlal Nayak has done several programmes on television and stated that he can perform just as well in front of a camera, since he forgets it is there when he starts to perform. However, Nayak admitted that he feels he performs better before a live audience. Although the loss of an audience does adversely affect the impact made by folk media, it is possible for the more experienced performers to adjust to the mass media, especially in view of the time limitation place on them. They tend mostly to just present their best pieces. The experiences of Shyam Benegal and Habib Tanvir show great adaptability on the part of good folk performers. This has also been the experience of Jai Chandiram during television recordings of folk performances. Besides, television and

film sets are usually peopled with cameramen, prop men, assistants and onlookers, so that the artist is rarely performing in a total void. One possible way of mitigating the loss of audience rapport is to include one : record the performance before a live audience, or even include an audience in the film as the Films Division's Asla Dadla Nakc Go Bai did. Another method would be to pick those folk media in which audience participation plays a comparatively limited role, puppets, for instance.

3) Lack of improvisation and of intimate knowledge of the audience - While the mass media cannot duplicate the folk performers' intimate and immediate knowledge of their audience, its current concerns and preoccupations, it can partly substitute for it by thorough and painstaking research before a programme is produced. This is possible only if the mass medium involves chooses a narrow enough target audience. In the case of a programme designed for all-India distribution, like the documentaries of the Films Division, the lack of intimate knowledge of the target audience cannot be compensated for. Some improvisation can be included with mass media formats, especially if an audience has been provided. The need for improvisation can be partially eliminated by tailoring a programme for its target audience in a highly specific and directed manner.

4) The camera and microphone are both sensitive and merciless - Adjustments in .hing like singling style, pitch, tone and volume, in make-up, costumes and the use of colour have to be made both by the folk performer and the radio, television or film producer.

On the other hand, mass media offer some obvious advantages. They can extend the range of performances, preserve it for posterity and broadcast it over and over again. Bill Baird has observed that using puppets on television, through it may lessen the impact of the puppets, does increase in the size of the audience, and that, in the long run, an increase in the size of

the audience may out-weigh the loss of impact.[1] The mass media can not only compensate for what is lost in the process of recording folk media but often even add new dimensions to the folk media by effectively employing their tools : shifting angles, distance and focus ; close-ups, reaction shots ; zooms ; pans ; freeze shots ; dissolves and many others. Radio can create sound pictures inexpensively and effectively with various sound effects. In addition, the mass media can, as Mr. Benegal pointed out, impart a new reality to the folk form, making its meaning stand out all the more clearly.

Some folk forms lend themselves more easily than others to adaptation for the mass media, and these are the ones that should be chosen. A form that adapts well to one medium of mass communication may not do as well in another. For instance, puppets seem to do much better on television than they do on film. Yakshagana is effective on the radio, but does badly on television because of the masks and heavy make-up. Differences between the folk media and the mass media must be recognized and suitable adjustments made, but the differences between different folk forms and between the different mass media must also be taken into account.

(1) Bill Baird, Puppets and Population, ed. Martha Keehn and Linda Burgess. New York : World Education, 1973.

C O N C L U S I O N S

Mr. K. B. Mathur of Unesco, Paris, made the following comment during the 1974 Inter-Regional Seminar-cum-Workshop in New Delhi : "Unesco believes that the role of mass media in developmental communication is crucial and that these media should be used in a systematic and integrated fashion with extension work. Research has established the fact that behavioural change directly attributable to mass media varies from 10 to 15 % and that this percentage goes up to 54 % when the mass media and extension work are integrated. The question which arises therefore is whether or not the mass media and extension work utilized along with folk media would help further increase the percentage of desired behavioural change."(1) However, the conclusions reached and the recommendations made during the Seminar-cum-Workshop or the 1972 Experts' Meeting in London cannot be held to be truly perceptible in communication policies in India. With the exception of the activity centred around the Kheda Communication Project, there is little difference in the extent of utilization of folk media in mass media before and after these meetings. Of course, individuals working in mass media who are drawn to folk media as a means of expression continue to do so, as do those who function through live performances.

Although there was little or no doubt expressed by such individuals that folk media can be very effectively utilized to convey relevant messages, opinions were found to be divided on the subject of mass media versus live performances. Some of the people interviewed were sceptical both about the possibility of integrating folk and mass media and about the wisdom of making the attempt. Mr. N. C. Jain felt that it would be years before mass media would have the capacity to reach remote villages.

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(1) Report on the Inter-Regional Seminar-cum-Workshop on the "Integrated Use of Folk Media and Mass Medi in Family Planning Communication Programmes", Special issue, IEC Newsletter, n°20, 1975.

There are 20 million radio receivers in India, and only one fifth of these are in rural areas. Community listening sets number about 100,000. Of the half-million television receivers functioning in the country, only 5,000 are community viewing sets. Documentary films are viewed by approximately ten million a day, but, once again, a large percentage of film viewers are in urban areas.(1) Mr. N. M. Desai, Regional Director of the Song and Drama Division at Chandigarh pointed out that a great number of Indian villages are beyond the reach of mass media, while others still have no electricity, thus rendering the mass media inaccessible to areas that probably need developmental messages the most. One would hope that this state of affairs is a temporary one and that eventually mass media services would be extended either through the use of satellites or terrestrial transmitters. Mr. Desai brought up another point which is perhaps of more significance : the relative lack of interest paid to mass media in comparison with a live performance. Soldiers at the front are adequately supplied with radio sets, but they crave the human contact that the Song and Drama Division Border Troupes provide, and are most appreciative of the attention. Similarly, in villages with electricity and with plenty of radio and television sets, a live performance means a great deal more than a special on radio or television. Far more control can be exercised over radio and television sets : they can be turned to another channel in the case of radio, or simply turned off. A live performance in one's village, on the other hand, is not easy to ignore. Live performances in villages can gather an 'unintentional' audience, people who are busy with something else, but stop just to listen to a couple of songs. Mr. Birendra Narain expressed the view that the novelty of some mass media techniques will sometimes overwhelm the audience to the point that the content of the programme itself and its messages are completely lost. He recalls an incident when a staff member of the Song and Drama Division, working on his own initiative, projected a moving cloud on to the backdrop during a play in a village. All the villagers remembered about the play

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(1) These figures have been taken from an article by G. N. S. Raghavan, "Problems of Communication in Family Planning", Communicator, in Vol. XII, nos. 3 and 4, July-October, 1978.

a few weeks later was the remarkable moving cloud, Mr. Benegal's experience in Chattisgarh, when the Nacha groups were able to bring the message of the special treatment of lentils home to the people far more rapidly than the film he shot is strong testimony in favour of live performances.

Advocates of live performances rather than mass media have some valid arguments in their favour. However, the power of the mass media should not be under-estimated either. All the reports and studies done so far on the utilization of folk media for developmental purposes have stressed greatly the need for extreme caution while inserting the desired message into the folksong form. The need for people trained in the art of communication as we well as those fully conversant with the intricacies and nuances of the folk forms has been repeatedly stressed. While it is possible to concentrate the efforts of such experts in the production of some programmes which can then be shown in several villages within a certain geographical and cultural radius, the need for multiple live performances makes this a difficult task. Problems such as supervision, the need for quality control, arrangements for the performances, complicate the issue. There are dangers inherent in creating a structure of live performances that becomes so diffuse that it is difficult to maintain checks and control. Producing fewer programmes and extending their reach through the mass media may provide a practical and, in the long run, less expensive substitute. In all, there is a lot to be said for fewer programmes, given limited resources, whether they are performed live or broadcast over the mass media. Programmes that are carefully designed and executed will have an overall greater impact than a greater number of programmes put together in a context of paucity in personnel, resources and time.

There was a general consensus among the people interviewed for this project that if the utilization of folk media for developmental purposes is to be effective, the approach must be a localized, narrow one, whether the efforts involves the use of live performances or mass media. Mr. Tanvir expressed the view that there is no sense in the use of folk forms in programmes

designed for universal consumption. Television has a tendency to standardize and homogenize, and it is important to see that ". . . culture does not lose its angularity, its particularity." This, according to Mr. Tanvir, is the lesson that SITE should have taught India's communicators. Satellites can be most effective when used to reach places inaccessible to local low-power transmitters, or to beam specific programmes to specific areas.

It was felt that communication must be two-sided and open-ended. One of the most effective ways of promoting development is to stimulate people to think about their own problems, identify and resolve them. Ready-made answers from someone who may not be familiar with all the intricacies of a situation in a given place at a given time are likely to be ignored more often than not. Information must be given where it is needed, awareness created where it does not exist, and fostered where it does. Most of all, information must be both given and taken from the people. All of this is possible only if a localized, area-specific approach is adopted.

Perhaps one of the most important resources available to India's communicators, and one that remains virtually untapped, are the folk performers themselves. As was discussed earlier, folk performers are powerful agents of change. However, in order for them to fulfil this function, they must be convinced of the validity of the message they are conveying. Perhaps not enough of an effort has been made to make the folk performers realize the importance of the new messages. Offering a monetary incentive to produce an item with a specific message will not result in meaningful communication. If the performers themselves are not completely committed to the new idea, they will not be able to put it across effectively. In the case of the Nacha groups and the lentils message, it was precisely because the performers were convinced of the worth of the message that they were able to encapsulate the message as well as they did. For the same reason, they lost no time in carrying the message to the surrounding villages. Keshav Kothari and some others feel that folk forms cannot be used at all by anyone except the folk performers. Suresh Awasthy was of the opinion that though folk performers

are capable of delivering a message when they don't believe in it, their hearts will not be in it, and this shows through. When the Soviet Union launched its project to promote socialism through the arts and folklore, it recognized the importance of two groups to that part of the project which related to folklore :

(a) folklorists who had direct contacts with folksingers and could give them educated guidelines for their creation and

(b) the folksingers and story tellers who had to put these guidelines into practice.

The folklorists proved easy to manipulate through party and government pressures, but the folk artists presented problems. Most belonged to the older generation and were totally or partially illiterate. A mini-campaign was launched to give the folk performers a quick political education and to expose them to those aspects of socialism which they would be expected to later glorify in their works. The performers were invited to regional or republic centres, or to Moscow and Leningrad, where they were taken to museums, lectures, concerts and theatrical performances. They were familiarized with the achievements of science and technology, literature and arts. Radios were installed in their homes. Conferences were held frequently to discuss their works and to share artistic experience. Competition were arranged. Some were elected to the Union of Soviet Writers, even though they were functionally illiterate, and awarded titles such as the Order of Lenin. In brief, these folk performers were showered with attention, monetary rewards and honours, and actually shown the glories of the system they were supposed to propagate. An approach such as this would, of course, be excessive in the Indian context, but some attempt should nevertheless be made to involve the folk performers at a more basic level, to show them the value of the messages they are being asked to project, and to motivate them to project these messages. Oftentimes, something as simple and basis as exposure to a new concept, familiarization with it, is enough for the folk performer to start introducing the new concept in his traditional repertoire. If a modern concept is engrained in a performer, if it becomes part of his ethos, it will somehow be expressed in his work. Railway stations, dams, planes and guns have been known to crop up in traditional tales without the slightest sense of incongruity. This is another reason why folk performers must be allowed to express the message in their own

way without the imposition of standards that are alien to the tradition. As Mr. Tanvir pointed out, folk performers have their own sense of colour, movement, imagery, language and logic, and this sense should be given full reign.

A few isolated attempts have been made in India to mobilize the support of folk performers. In 1979 the Adult Education Directorate of the Ministry of Education arranged a workshop in Dehra Dun to secure the involvement of rural practitioners of the traditional media. Thirty six composers and singers from the Himalayan region (extending from Jammu and Kashmir to Manipur and Tripura) were invited to participate in the workshop, along with experts in traditional media and adult education. Some of the folk performers present claimed that they have fulfilled the function of change-agents, and would continue to do so, without training or prodding, as long as folk arts were supported and encouraged to flourish. It seems then, that if folk performers are motivated and encouraged, and allowed to formulate the messages in their own way, better results could be achieved. This method is certainly better than just giving the instructions and monetary incentives.

A sense of commitment and involvement is important not only on the part of the performers, but also on the part of those who seek to use the folk forms. Part of the reason why the use of folk media during the national independence movement period proved so effective was because the people who used the folk media were at the same time involved in direct political action : they were marching and striking, being arrested and persecuted. The participation of development workers in follow-up action in support of the messages being conveyed would greatly enhance the credibility of these messages. As Mr. Raina demonstrated in Kheda, showing the villagers how to do something new, say, how to use a new fertilizer, is pointless if the fertilizer is not made simultaneously available to them. Commitment on the part of development workers is crucial, for if the effort is made sincerely and enthusiastically, it provokes a response, whatever the medium. Groups of

concerned young people in different parts of India are trying in diverse ways to put across to the people information about causes that they believe in. The students at Osmania University have been known to use Burrakatha to raise the political consciousness of the people. In New Delhi, a group of young volunteers which calls itself Stree Sanghursh, puts on informal street-theatre performances around the city, choosing times and place where they are likely to attract more people. Members of the group write and perform little plays focussing on the problems of women. Another Delhi-based group is Jana Natya Manch, founded in 1973 by students activists of Delhi University. This group has performed about twelve plays during the last three and a half years, running over eight hundred performances in and around Delhi and in other Indian cities. These organizations are strictly voluntary ones ; all the members are educated and hold full-time jobs. Neither one of them deliberately attempts to use any folk formats, even though elements in their performance can be traced back to their folk origins. For instance, Stree Sanghursh begins its performance with character who plays on a drum and keeps up a stream of humorous patter designed to attract the attention of enough people before the play proper starts. This technique, especially the drumming, is commonly used in folk theatre. Mobile Creches, strives to educate the migrants, especially children, while at the same time entertaining them. Lok Doot draws on religious and mytholigical themes, folktales, Panchatantra stories, humorous skits. Programmes are highly improvisory and highly topical. Other Indian cities have their own versions : Utpal Dutt's street theatre group in Calcutta presents impromptu playlets on day to day topics and performs at village markets, street corners and industrial areas. Like Stree Sunghursh, it is close to being a kind of documentary theatre, presenting hard facts and actual figures to the audience. Prasanna's street theatre group Samudai is very active in Bangalore.

Perhaps it is time to review and revise some of the present notions of what constitutes folk media or folk forms. In performances of the kind described above we may have the next generation of folk media, eloving and developing to suit the needs of present day society. The film songs that were

spoken of so disparagingly by some of the people interviewed for this project are certainly in the process of becoming some kind of shared folk heritage. Their inclusion in the performances of even traditional folk performances does not have to be viewed as popularization or vulgarization of the folk forms. It may well be merely the normal and natural outcome of the folk process. Shyam Benegal spoke of hearing a young boy, sitting by a lake in Chattisgarh and singing a beautiful song. Mr. Benegal recorded the song, and only later discovered that the lyrics were those of a popular Hindi film song, though the boy had provided his own melody. Mr. Benegal commented that the song had obviously become part of the boy's environment, that he had incorporated the song into his system. Mr. Benegal and some of the others interviewed for this project are not disturbed by this process, for folk forms are by definition in a constant state of flux. To talk of the importance of preserving purity and tradition is to deny an important aspect of the way folk media function.

Future surveys of the use of folk media in mass media should most certainly take into consideration the activity of the Indian feature film industry. In the opinion of Gopal Dhutia, there has been considerably more adaptation of folk media in commercial cinema than in the government-controlled mass media agencies. Several prominent film practitioners came to this medium directly from the folk tradition. While the influence of folk music on film music has often been commented on, other issues remain untouched. For instances, to what extent does the Indian film industry borrow its concepts of village sets from folk theatre ? Deep structural affinities between the narrative lines of individual films and various folk genres could be another fruitful avenue of study. Indian feature films could potentially provide an extremely valuable way of studying the process of adaptation of folk media to mass media, since this process seems to be full developed at this stage. Mr. O. P. Sharma's choice of a film playback singer to sing a folk song for Pyar ki Jeet Hui rather than the folk singers themselves is relevant in this respect. A recent Gujerati film by Ketan Mehta Bhavni Bhavai, which won the National Film Award for the best film on national integration in

1981 uses Bhavai in a most effective manner. The film is based on Dhedano Vesh, generally ascribed to Asait Thakar, who originated the form. This ancient Bhavai vesha is skillfully interwoven with a contemporary story highlighing the oppression of the poor. Bhavani Bhavai offers a fascinating opportunity to study the process of both the integration of folk and mass media and the updating of a traditional form, and the use of folk media for the transmission of specific messages.

The base of what are considered folk media in India should therefore be broadened to include feature films, forms that have been looked down on, marginal forms which are either considered suspect or have merely been ignored so far. For example, the many wandering snake-charmers, monkey and bear training acts, travelling acrobats and magicians could function as excellent change agents through the pattern that all of them traditionally indulge in, if their potential is recognized and utilized. There really should be no sitting in judgement over the purity and aesthetic merits of the form ; whatever works is good, even if it seems vulgar or distasteful to the eyes of the development worker or folklorist. A statement made by Richmond Farley about folk plays done with specific messages in mind is true of the utilization of other folk forms as well : ". . . a new standard of literary criticism may have to be evolved to deal with the growing corpus of plays produced by and for social and political institutions, since it seems somewhat inconsistent to criticize writers in this field for abandoning the established principles of artistic creation when their aim and purpose is not to produce a literary masterpiece but to bring about social change."(1)

The presence of elements taken from folk forms is perhaps one of the reasons why the Indian film industry has become as popular as it is. The forms retain their appeal for the people, even if they are presented to them in a new guise. The use of the common store-house of subject matter

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(1) Richmond Farley, "The Social Role of Theatre in India", Sangeet Natak,n°25, July-September, 1972, p. 81.

which all the folk forms share is often all it takes to ensure popularity. Although the print media have not been included in this study, it may be pertinent to mention here the phenomenal success in India of Amar Chitra Katha, a series of comic books drawing on stories from mythology, history, legend and folktales. The Amar Chitra Katha comic books began to appear in 1967, with a new title every three months. Anant Pai, the originator and editor of the series reports that the first two to three years were slow, and then sales of the comic books shot up. During the summer of 1981, sales reached six and half lakh copies a month. Adarsh Chitra Katha has 255 titles in print, with two new ones appearing each month. They are published in English, Hindi, Bengali, Kannada, Malyalam, Telegu, Oriya, Assamese, Punjabi, Marathi and Gujerati. Some titles have been translated into foreign langues - French, Spanish, Malaysian, Fijian, Serbo-Croation. Adarsh Chitra Katha now has several imitators and competitors, anxious to cash in on the tremendous popularity of the comic books. According to Mr. Pai, Adarsh Chitra Katha aims at educating children in an interesting manner and at bringing them closer to their cultural roots. No efforts are made to preach or to draw lessons, and certainly none to insert specific messages other than those which the story already contains. In addition to these comic books, Amar Chitra Katha has produced about 250 cassettes, of which 30 are meant for children. These cassettes contain recordings of stories and tales about legendary characters such as Dhruv, Prahlad, Sudama and Birbal in prose and song. Folksongs and music are also available in the Amar Chitra Katha cassette series. Those who are distressed by the decay and current unpopularity of some of the folk forms should look to the new forms of expression that the common cultural fund of India has found for itself. These are forms of expression which increasingly involve the use of mass media, forms which shape and are shaped by the new medium. The old forms survive, in a fashion, and their appeal to the people endures. There may again be those who deplore the emergence of forms such as commercial cinema and comics and bewail the passing of the great forms with all their aethetic a and literary merits. These changes are, however, inevitable and inexorable. They are an expression of the times just as surely as the older folk forms were an expression of theirs. It must also be remembered that we are witnessing

the very beginnings of the transition to mass media. There is no doubt that refinements will take place, and that these new forms of creative expression will come to have an even more universal appeal than they now enjoy.

Greater efforts must therefore be made to evolve formats unique to mass media, format which can draw on the strengths of both folk and mass media. As Mr. Baradi of the Kheda Communication Project pointed out, these new formats cannot be lifted completely from the old ones, neither can the old formats be totally ignored. Ways must be found of creating dynamic combinations and blends which, while retaining a sense of cultural continuity, would still be relevant in the contemporary context. While borrowing stock characters and conventions from the folk media is one way of doing this, there are other methods. For instance, although Indian feature films did not consciously pattern themselves on folk theatre, we do find that the majority of Indian films weave together song, dance and drama, a feature that is characteristic of Indian folk theatre as well. Other elements such as this could be picked up. Jatra always begins with a climax : a demon holding aloft a head dripping with blood, the firing of a gun, the whipping of labourers, etc. In Therukoothu the performers describe the characters they are playing, speaking of themselves in the third person. In Bhavai, the performers often address the audience directly in the middle of a vesha (this device has been used to good effect in Ketan Mehta's Bhavni Bhavai). There is no reason why a modern play could not use devices such as these in a contemporary setting. The structural elements typical of a given folk form can be studied and incorporated into new formats intended for the same audience that the folk form covered. Structural analyses of the folk forms could reveal information such as : What is the pattern of conflict and resolution of conflict within this form ? The pattern of crisis versus period of calm ? The laws of opening and closing ? Does the story follow a single or multiplestrand ? How rigidly are the characters patterned ? What is the degree of contrast between opposing principles ? If a new format, dealing with contemporary subjects, can incorporate these elements, it would be both traditional and contemporary at the same time,

in much the same manner that the traditional forms themselves contrive to be.

The importance of structure and form in the way that folk media function was touched upon by Mr. E. Alkazi during the Round Table on the Contemporary Relevance of Traditional Theatre held in New Delhi in 1971 : "As far as forms are concerned they are very important and an integral part of communication. I think that the very structure of the traditional folk plays is part and parcel of the meaning communicated to the audience. . . it is somewhat important perhaps to understand through experimentation, through research, through the scientific approach to the whole thing, the validity of the form. I think the form cannot merely be taken for granted and merely accepted as ritual. One has to understand the significance and the validity of the form in the communication of the ideas."(1) In a very real and basis sense, the structure is the medium, and if this structure can be isolated and successfully incorporated into new formats, communication through the new formats can be just as effective as communication through the old formats was, even if, on the surface, the two may seem to have little in common.

There is, however, a troublesome aspect to use of structure borrowed from the traditional forms. If it is true that folk forms contained structurally-embedded and structurally-encoded messages, it becomes crucial to first examine the content of these messages, to decode them, before incorporating the structure into the new medium, before perpetuating the old messages. The social messages embedded in the old structure may have been designed for a different social reality, and have lost their relevance in the face of social change. It is possible, therefore, that one may end up subtly reinforcing precisely those aspects of social life where a change is being sought. Mr. Romesh Chandra came very close to confirming this hypothesis when he expressed the feeling that folk theatre has done very

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(1) Taken from the Discussion Section of Round Table on the Contemporary Relevance of Traditional Theatre, Special issue, Sangeet Natak, n°21, July-September, 1971, p. 20-21.

little to fundamentally change the existing social order : ". . . folk theatre in the villages always has been utilized for social comment - but social comment of a very mild type. I think it was a very conscious effort to keep a mild criticism in order to preserve the then existing statu quo. I do not think a conscious effort was ever made to change the existing order through folk theatre."(1) Mr. Raina's concern about his inability to shake the villagers' apathy despite all possible efforts can also be explained through the fact that while we may be including messages in folk forms which we have designed to promote social change in a series of asides and comments, the main play may very well be promoting the opposite, and doing so in a more fundamental and effective fashion since the messages are being absorbed at a structural subconscious level. A great deal of research is necessary in order to expose the messages hidden at the deep structural level of a given folk item. While this is a highly specialized and laborious task, it could prove to be extremely valuable in long term strategies of communication aimed at the achievement of social change.

The importance of research and experimentation in this new field of applied folklore cannot be stressed enough. To be sure, there have been successful attempts made both in India and elsewhere, but these attempts have been sporadic and have left many questions unanswered. In order to test whether a particular message has in fact been successfully transmitted though a certain folk form, the presence of a control group where the message was transmitted through non-traditional forms is necessary. The success of the transmission through the folk form would have to be predicated on tangible results like, for instance, did the birth rate in the experimental group drop significantly in comparison with the control group ? What was the percentage of variation from the norm in both cases ? If it is established that the experiment was a success in one situation, could it be repeated successfully in another situation, with a different set of variables ? Testing must be put on a more scientific basis, and all research conducted before, during and after the fact. Initial field surveys which take into account

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(1) Ibid, p. 35.

factors such as literacy and level of awareness, community composition, occupations, socio-economic structure, value systems, categories of prevalent traditional media, popularity, ability to adapt to new messages, the choice of the new medium, are crucial in the formulation of communication strategy. Thorough research and testing of this kind is not new to the Indian context, but no major studies have been undertaken to test the efficacy of folk media in the transmission of social messages, or the integration of folk and mass media for a similar purpose.

The utilization of folk forms for developmental purposes poses a complex problem. There are no simple answers and no single answers. In order to be effective, at least till more is known about the process, a multi-pronged approach shoud be adopted ; all possible approaches and methods should be pressed into service. Live performances are as valid as mass media ; folk performers should work both independently and under supervision ; efforts should be made by official and private agencies and by concerned individuals ; mass media must use old formats and evolve new ones ; structure must be both preserved and destroyed. There are contexts in which one approach, one folk form, one medium of transmission may be more suitable than all others, and contexts where any one or all of several possible approaches can be used. Above all, flexibility of approach, treating each attempts in its unique context, taking into consideration all of its unique ramifications must remain a prime consideration in the utilization of folk media for the transmission of developmental messages.

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APPENDIX I

POLICY

Matters related to policies in India regarding the use of folk media in mass media for developmental purposes have been discussed at some length in the main body of this study. Some points that were not adequately covered are included in this appendix.

In 1977 a Working Group under the chairmanship of George Verghese was set up to study and make recommendations concerning future patterns of growth, the form and organization of radio and television. The Verghese Group suggested the establishment of a chain of local radio stations at the district level and television stations with low-power transmitters for local coverage. This decentralization was designed to remove the physical and cultural distance between communicator and his audience. The Verghese Group recommended also the use of local folklore to convey developmental and contemporary messages, with the help of locally-recruited folk performers. The recommendations of the Verghese Group represent a significant break-through in policy matters regarding the use of folk media in mass media. However, Mr. G. N. S. Raghavan indicates in an article entitled "Do Mass Media Reach Masses ?" (Communicator, Vol. XV, n°3, July, 1980) that follow-up action on these recommendations has not been particularly impressive. Though the Sixth Five-Year Plan (1978-83) provided for the establishment of five low-power radio stations for operation on a district level, using the local dialect rather than the literary version of the regional language, the future of these radio stations remains undetermined. The 1978-83 Plan made no provisions to utilize the first Indian-owned satellites INSAT-1 for actual broadcasts or telecasts, although the satellite has this capacity. INSAT-1 was, however, to have been used to strengthen the existing sound broadcasting network of Akashvani. Unfortunately, INSAT-1, launched earlier in 1982, was declared dead 150 days after its launch due to technical malfunctions and a depletion of fuel supply. INSAT-2 is to be launched in 1983.

A list of unanimous recommendations made by the 1980 Seminar on

Communication and the Traditional Media, organized by the Indian Institute of Mass Communication and the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune, forms a part of this appendix. Once again, though these recommendations are relevant and represent desirable changes in India's development and communication strategies, it is not yet clear to what extent they will eventually be incorporated and implemented.

There are, however, some tangible positive developments. There were indications from Mr. N.S. Thapa that the Films Division of India has every intention of making an increased use of folk forms and regional languages to convey ideas concerning rural development, health and hygiene, family planning, untouchability and communal harmony. A series such as The Wisdom of Mauji Ram promises well for the future. In addition, Mr. Thapa, expressing dissatisfaction with present feedback arrangements with the Directorate of Field Publicity and the Department of Family Planning, has hired a professional research group to conduct surveys in four parts of the country. Different packages of films will be shown in these areas and feedback collected. A special effort will be made to test retention of messages after a suitable time lapse. In all 70 films, divided into four packages, will be shown and tested in this manner. Films based on folk forms will be included in the packages. For instance, there will be several Tamasha-based films in the package for Maharashtra. The results of these surveys should prove very interesting from the point of view of the utilization of folk media in mass media.

Although the Song and Drama Division has not completely adopted an area-specific approach, it is moving in that direction with the growing prominence of special campaigns like the one launched in Punjab in January, 1982, which selected messages and package programmes with a particular area in mind, addressing the specific problems of that area at that point in time. The beginnings of a more localized approach are visible in campaigns of this kind, which are becoming more frequent in the strategy of the Song and Drama Division.

Another hopeful sign is the forthcoming reorganization of the Department of Traditional Media at the Indian Institute of Mass Communication. A special committee was set up to study the workings of the department and to make recommendations regarding future growth. Mr. N.L. Chowla, Director of the Indian Institute of Mass Communication indicated that the committee has suggested an expansion of the department's activities and that efforts are now under way to implement this suggestion as well as others made by the committee. It is hoped that this new and enlarged Department will take upon itself the function of research and experimentation designed to increase our present knowledge about the communication potential of folk media and the manner of communication peculiar to them, as well as practical aspects of the integration of folk and mass media for purposes of development.

The following list of recommendations is reproduced from Communication and the Traditional Media : Papers and Proceedings of Seminar Organized by IIMC and the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune. (New Delhi : Indian Institute of Mass Communication, 1981, p. 15-18).

UNANIMOUS RECOMMENDATIONS

The following are the unanimous recommendations of the seminar :

1. Communication - An essential input for development

The Seminar felt very strongly that communication should be recognised as an essential input for development and any expenditure made in this regard should be considered as essential investment in development. The folk forms/traditional media of communication can play a vital role in communicating to and with the people, particularly, in rural areas, including the modern messages.

2. Adequate economic support

It was felt that the state of many of the folk media is very bad especially in terms of economic support. Unless the folk artists are assured of a reasonable economic security they will not be able to function effectively. So communicators should take it as part of their duty to educate the folk artists about their rights and help them to avoid being exploited. The communicators could also identify artists of certain folk forms which need special support because they are languishing, and they should bring it to the notice of the organisations like the Sangeet Natak Akademi. While it was noticed that the Central Government and some State Governments were providing some support to folk performing artists, it was felt that such support should be adequate and other states should also adopt this practice.

3. Live performances

The Seminar felt that the impact of the traditional media would be maximum only through live performances. Keeping this in mind as many live performances as possible should be arranged.

4. Training and utilising local troupes

It was also felt that for effective communication it would be very desirable to train and utilise local troupes or activate troupes existing in the area rather than getting troupes from outside. Local troupes should be given orientation and encouraged to perform within the area.

5. Utilising retired masters

The Seminar strongly felt the need of training young aspirants in different folk forms. It, therefore, recommends the training agencies to enlist the help and guidance of retired masters who should be adequately compensated.

6. Official Communicator should be near the scene of action

While using traditional media for official publicity the official media expert (communicator) should be as near the scene of media action as possible to tackle not only any communication problem in close co-operation with the artists but to be in a position to provide necessary facilities to the artists expeditiously.

7. Traditional media and reconstruction programmes

The Seminar was unanimous in the view that traditional folk media have a very significant role to play in national reconstruction and non-formal education. In this connection it was felt that in all national reconstruction and development programmes these media should be actively associated.

8. Folk forms for subject curriculum

The Seminar was of the view that folk forms could be used for subject curriculum teaching even as other audio-visual aids are being used at present. It was felt students should be exposed to traditional media as part of their cultural education.

It was also felt that art forms can be taught in school in the rural areas outside the curriculum. Incentives by [illegible] of stipends can be offered to such students who volunteer.

9. Traditional forms and electronic media

Television as a medium should be used only for such traditional media/folk forms where visuals are involved. Where the information is only oral, it should be left to sound broadcasting.

It should be kept in mind that a programme either on television or on radio is not a substitute for a live performance. These programmes should only supplement live programmes which should be as many as possible. Programmes telecast or broadcast

should as far as possible be recorded in the field.

The programmes should be localised and be presented through the dialect of the region.

It was felt that half-inch VTR with monitor had much potential in presenting folk art programmes and therefore this facility should be expanded and exploited fully by all field units.

10. Formative research

The Seminar recognised the importance of research and emphasised that formative research should be undertaken to make more authentic and effective programmes which should be pretested and evaluated on a regular basis to improve their quality further.

In order to enable this the communicator should try to prepare a data bank of basic information on the demographic features, the socio-economic conditions and the culture moves of the community and locally prevalent forms and artists.

11. Inventory of folk artists

The Seminar felt that in order to identify and train folk artists for communicating new ideas, it would be desirable that an inventory of folk artists, formwise and regionwise, may be undertaken by Institutions like Indian Institute of Mass Communication and Sangeet Natak Akademi.

12. Removal of legal constraints

The Seminar strongly felt that legal constraints such as obtaining permission from the police are a great hurdle to the development of folk media and so it recommends that all such hurdles be removed. It also, recommended that folk media be exempted from payment of entertainment tax.

13. Committees to select folk artists

The Seminar felt that the selection of folk artists is on the basis of personal biases. In order to avoid this the Seminar recommends that committees consisting of knowledgeable persons drawn from organisations like Song and Drama Division, the Field Publicity Units, All India Radio and Sangeet Natak Akademi be constituted for the purpose.

14. Recruiting practitioners of folk media

The Seminar felt that eminent practitioners of the folk media could be profitably recruited for development work. In order to enable this the agencies concerned should consider relaxing the normal rules of recruitment to the extent necessary.

APPENDIX II

List of people interviewed or consulted in India during the month of January 1982

Institute affiliations are indicated where relevant.

Suresh Awasthy

Shyam Benegal

Kamala Bhasin, Stree Sunghursh

Jai Chandiram, Doordarshan

N.L. Chowla, Indian Institute of Mass Communication

N.M. Desai, Song and Drama Division

Gopal Dhutia, UNICEF

K.K. Garg , Films Division in India

Satwant Singh Gill, Tehsil Publicity Officer, Directorate of Field Publicity

N.C. Jain

Arvind Kaul, Government of Himachal Pradesh

Kalpana Khosla, Centre for Russian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

Keshav Kothari, Kathak Kendra

Meera Lakhiya, Indian Space Research Organisation

Rashpal Malhotra, Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh

Malu Ram, puppeteer (Rajasthan string puppet tradition)

Milkhi Ram, Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendra

Rita Mukherjee, Akashvani

Birendra Narain, Song and Drama Division

Chimanlal Nayak, Bhavai performer

Anant Pai, Amar Chitra Katha

Keshav Pande, Akashvani

Kailash Pandiya, Darpana

Jiwan Pani, Sangeet Natak Akademi

N.N. Pillai, Food Corporation of India

Pran Nath Premi, Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendre

Ranjana, Saraswati Sangeet Kala Kendra

Sunil Sethi, India Today

O.P. Sharma, Films Division of India
Bag Singh, Government of Punjab
Kulwant Singh, former Sarpanch, Landran village
Shekhar Singh, Indian Institute of Public Administration
Krishan Sondhi, Planning Commission of India
Habib Tanvir
N.S. Thapa, Films Division of India
Bela Trivedi, Indian Space Research Organisation
Himanshu Trivedi, Indian Space Research Organisation

List of documentary films produced by the Films Division of India viewed in connection with this study. Names of directors and the year of production are indicated where this information was available.

Akal ki Bakal, O.P. Sharma, 1980
Apka Bhavishya, 1967
Asha ki Kiran, O.P. Sharma, 1972
Asla Dadla Nako Ga Bai, Krishna Kapil, 1978
Bichar, 1977
Ek Thi Lacchi, 1974
The Farmer's Wife, Krishna Kapil
Ghalib ki Dilli, Krishna Kapil, 1977
Jatra, Krishna Kapil
Machinewala, Krishna Kapil, 1978
The Mist is Clearing, O.P. Sharma, 1981
Nitai Majhi Pala, 1977
Pyar ki Jeet Hui, O.P. Sharma, 1971
Sandesh, O.P. Sharma, 1967
Sasural ki Sair, Krishna Kapil, 1974
The Ungrateful Man, 1978
A Village Called Dhani, O.P. Sharma, 1974

The questionnaire used for the present study and mailing list was sent to approximately 45 Akashvani and Doordarshan stations and to the following individuals and organizations :

Prabhat Kumar Bhattacharya, Ujjain
Dr. Pramar Jyoti Deka, Gauhati
Sudha Desai, Baroda
Utpal Dutt, Calcutta
Raghunath Goswami, Calcutta
Kerala Sastra, Trivandrum
Dr. R.K. Nayak, Bhubaneshwar
Swatantra Kumar Ojha, Indore
Gaston Roberge, Calcutta
Badal Sarcar, Calcutta
Sidheshwar Sen, Indore
Jaswant Thakar, Ahmedabad
Urmil Thapaliyal, Lucknow
V. Veeraih, Vijayawada